

Guru Nanak

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Uncloaking Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Guru Nanak

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INTRODUCTION

The boldest and most grotesque lie uttered by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad al-Qadiani (1839-1908CE), the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, was undoubtedly his claim to being the promised messiah of the Jews, Christians and Muslims. Of course, this and similar such claims, including his proclamation of Prophethood, were incontrovertibly rejected by Muslims the world over who excommunicated him from the folds of Islam and unanimously declared him to be a *Dajjal*, literally ‘an imposter’ or false Prophet. [1]

Ghulam Ahmad, however, paid little mind to these reactions. Instead, as he forged ahead to fabricate ever more elaborate arguments to desperately prove his stance and maintain his hold on the gullible few who had fallen victim to his falsehoods, Ahmad himself fell victim to the proverb ‘a lie begets a lie’. It was in this context that he concocted one particular argument which alleged that the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, was never a Sikh, but a Hindu who converted to Islam and lived his life as a devote Muslim. To corroborate this, Ahmad managed to scrape together artefacts attributed to Nanak which he would later present as tenuous evidence in support of his case. Ever since then, the Ahmadiyya, who are also called Qadianis/ Qadiyanis or Qadianiyya, have been obsessed in defending and promoting this argument as positive evidence of their messiah’s claim to prophethood.

This entire line of inquiry was summed up below by Ahmadiyya apologist, Naeem Osman Memon:

The Ahmadiyya Muslim literature contains sufficient evidence to prove that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had been a recipient of *Divine revelation* years before he actually claimed to be the Promised Messiah. For instance, in his famous treatise *Sat Bachan*, written between September 1895 and November 1895, he states:

‘Thirty years ago, I was given knowledge of the circumstances of Baba Nanak.’ [2]

This knowledge which had been bestowed upon Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad by God Almighty some 30 years before he wrote *Sat Bachan* between September 1895 and November 1895, or to make the calculation easier for the contentious mullahs, in around 1865, indicated **that Hazrat Baba Nanak professed and practised the faith of Islam [3] and not Sikhism as had been erroneously thought for many centuries.**

Not even the adversaries of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad would deny that Hazrat Baba Guru Nanak has traditionally been considered to have been the founder of the Sikh religion. Yet, on the basis of this *Divine knowledge* bestowed upon him, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad announced that **Hazrat Baba Nanak, upon whom be peace, was a practising Muslim** and the evidence of his being a Muslim would in due course be become a matter of public knowledge. [4]

This prophesy, issued on the basis of Divine revelation was fulfilled when **Baba Nanak’s cloak, the famous ‘Chola Saheb’** was discovered and the credo of Islam as well as several verses of the Holy Quran were found to have been inscribed on it. [5]

The truth of this knowledge bestowed upon Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1865 was once again proved when the revered saint’s prayer book, the *‘Poethi of Baba Saheb’* preserved as a

relic at the Sikh Gurdawara at *Guru Har Sahai*, was found to be a copy of the *Glorious Quran*. [\[6\]](#)

Whether the opponents of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad care to admit it or not, the fact remains that Hazrat Baba Guru Nanak's allegiance to Islam and his close association with Islamic institutions is universally accepted by the historians of the world. [\[7\]](#), [\[8\]](#) (bold, underline ours)

But there are problems with this argument that warrant highlighting. The first involves his use of the ambiguous terms "allegiance" and "close association" which are simply too vague for arguing that having "allegiance to Islam" or "close association with Islamic institutions" proves Nanak's Muslim identity.

Secondly, the word "Islam" is also too loose a term for the author to convincingly assert that Nanak's allegiance to Islam and close association with Islamic institutions has been accepted by historians the world over. The term represents such a plethora of inter- and intra-sectarian beliefs and ideologies – many of which are diametrically opposed – that to claim allegiance to the religion of Islam requires that one firstly determine the type of Islam being referred to. This can only be done by firstly defining the term carefully.

Thirdly, it is important to understand why Memon curiously references (Fn. 6) a late nineteenth century work titled: *Dictionary of Islam*, as evidence as opposed to one that is more up-to-date. The reason is because this dictionary was first cited for the very same reason by none other than Ghulam Ahmad himself in his treatise, *Satt Bachan* (Seven Statements). But, as we shall come to show, had the pair read this source with due care and diligence, they would have realised that it actually stands as evidence against them rather than for them.

There is then the occasion of Nanak's apparent pilgrimage to Mecca that is repeated ad nauseam. Take, for instance, *The Official Website of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* as an example:

In 1895 Hudhoo (AS) made known the outcome of his research regarding the religious beliefs of Founder of the Sikh religion. Hudhoo (AS) stated that although Hadhrat Baba Nanak was born in a Hindu household, he had later on accepted Islam.

Hadhrat Baba Nanak (1469-1539) was a righteous person who **meticulously followed ALL the teachings of Islam**, so much so that he **traveled to Mecca for the purpose of performing pilgrimage to the House of Allah**. One of his holy gowns contained Islamic declaration of faith, as well as many verses of the Holy Quran inscribed in Arabic. [\[9\]](#) (bold, capitalisation ours)

Finally, there is the "careful study of Sikh traditions", which the Qadiani Prof Abdul Jaleel assures, "lead to an irrefutable conclusion that Guru Nanak discarded the Hindu doctrines and assimilated the teachings of Islam to such an extent that Sikhism, in its pristine form, can be looked upon as a sect of Islam". [\[10\]](#)

In short then, the Ahmadiyya's claim rests essentially on two grounds:

1. Relics attributed to Nanak.
2. The Sikh historical tradition.

The purpose of this paper will, therefore, not be to disprove Nanak's Muslim identity from a theological perspective (this has been achieved in our article: [Guru Nanak was NEVER a Muslim](#)), but critically dissect this century-old argument from an historical point of view so as to determine whether it rests on empirically well confirmed assumptions or mere conjecture.

GURU NANAK'S HAGIOGRAPHIES (*JANAM SAKHIS*)

Before this, it will be helpful to provide an historical overview of what are known as *Janam Sakhis* (henceforth abbreviated JS) in the Sikh tradition that Ghulam Ahmad relied so heavily on as proof. Prof William Hewat *McLeod*, a man who has courted significant controversy despite being described as "the leading scholar of Sikh history and religion in the Western world" by some, [\[11\]](#) defined these as follows:

The *janam-sakhis* are properly defined not as biographies of Guru Nanak, but as hagiographic accounts of his life. They are tradition in precisely the same sense as the Hadith, and although they lack some of the features associated with their Muslim counterpart they have nevertheless developed in response to the same impulses, and in a less formalized manner they have fulfilled much the same role within their parent community. [\[12\]](#)

It is important to highlight, however, that unlike the hadith tradition in Islam, which developed and perfected from a very early period a robust and airtight methodological system for authenticating traditions attributed to Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), the *janam sakhi* tradition was recorded with far less care and attention to veracity.

In any case, for what they are worth, then Dr Kirpal Singh, who published a number of works on these hagiographic accounts, stated:

The *Janamsakhis* are of four kinds:

1. **Colebrooke's Janamsakhi.** It has two other names – *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* as it had been brought from old India Office Library, London. *Puratan Janamsakhi* was the title given to it by Bhai Vir Singh, an eminent scholar who edited it and got it published in 1926. We shall discuss it in details *[sic]* in this paper.
2. **Meharban's Janamsakhi.** Meharban was the grandson of Guru Ram Das, the fourth Sikh Guru. It was written in the 17th Century. Recently the writer of these lines edited and annotated it and got it published in 1962. It is in the form of dialogues and gives a lot of information.
3. **Bhai Bala's Janamsakhi.** It is the most popular *Janamsakhi* and highlights the achievements of Guru Nanak.
4. **Bhai Mani Singh's Janamsakhi.** This was compiled after the death of Guru Gobind Singh. It gives in detail the Guru Nanak's sojourns in the western side, viz. Central Asian countries. Bhai Mani Singh was an eminent scholar and is reported to be author of a number of books. [\[13\]](#)

According to Kirpal, while the *Bala JS* is the "most popular", the *Puratan* is evidently older. [\[14\]](#) Moreover, like the *Bala* version, the *Puratan* too has a number of manuscripts associated to it. As Jagpal Tiwana delineated, these include:

- The *Vilayatvali JS* (also known as the *Colebrook JS*).

- The *Hafizabad JS* (or the *Macauliffe vali JS* since it was edited and published by the celebrated Sikh-British scholar, Max Arthur Macauliffe) whose “contents are quite close to the Colebrooke janamsakhi”. According to Tiwana: “These two manuscripts remain amongst the most important of the Puratan tradition.”
- Five additional manuscripts that are “all in agreement with the account contained in former two janam-sakhis”. [\[15\]](#)

Specifically regarding the *ColebrookeJS*, Kirpal believed its compilation date to be 1634CE:

The colophone of the *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* mentions the year of its compilation as: *Kaljug Char Hazar Sat Sau Panti Barsbitya* viz the Kalyug has passed 4735 years. If we try to find out the corresponding year of the Christian era, according to the Indian Ephemeris of Kannu Pillay, it works out to be 1634 AD which suggests that this *Janamsakhi* was written at the time when Bhai Gurdas was alive. It is just possible that the author might have before him the first Var of Bhai Gurdas, as its influence is evident on his work. ... Some scholars are of the opinion that the *Puratan Janamsakhi* was written by Bhai Sewa Das in 1588 A.D. and that it was the oldest *Janamsakhi* **but the name of its author and the year of its writing is not corroborated by any reliable source**. None of the available copies of this *Janamsakhi* suggest the name of the author or an earlier date of compilation. Its internal evidence suggests that it was **compiled in 1634**. Historically speaking, it is very useful for compiling the biography of Guru Nanak as **it provides very reliable information**. [\[16\]](#) (bold ours)

McLeod on the other hand was slightly more hesitant than Kirpal *vis-à-vis* its date. In his estimation:

Although the manuscript bears no date for either an original compilation or the actual copying, a cryptic reference in the sakhi ‘Jhanda the Carpenter and the *Jugavali*’ points to the year A.D. 1635. It is possible that this reference is intended to indicate the year in which the *Puratan* version was first compiled, and there can be no doubt that a janam-sakhi of the *Puratan* variety might well have been recorded at that time. A reference of this kind is, however, slender evidence. It occurs in the apocryphal *jugavali* (a work borrowed by the Colebrooke compiler from one of his sources), and it does not appear in all other *Puratan* manuscripts. The reference may relate to an original compilation, or to a later recension, or to a particular part of the composite *Puratan* tradition. Another possibility is that it may be entirely spurious. It occurs as an obscure reference within an esoteric work, circumstances which are scarcely favourable to positive conclusions. The text bears all the marks of an early seventeenth century janam-sakhi, but beyond this supposition it is impossible to proceed. The actual manuscript is evidently later than this period. This conclusion is suggested by the salutation with which the manuscript concludes: *bolahu vahi guru ji ki fatai hoi*. There is no evidence to suggest that this formula was used prior to the time of Guru Gobind Singh, from which it follows that the manuscript was probably copied during the early eighteenth century. [\[17\]](#)

And though Tiwana also held the Puratan tradition to be “older than the Bala Janamsakhi”, he too acknowledged “some dispute about the origin of the *puratan* janamsakhi date. Kirpal Singh insists that it was written [in] 1634, but Kahn Singh Nabha followed by Khushwant Singh and Gopal Singh claim that it was written in the last quart of the 16th century (1588) by Sewa Das. McLeod does not give an exact date, but puts it in time of Guru Arjan, ‘Its language and gram[m]atical constructions show that this janam sakhi must have bee[n] written around the time of the compilation of Adi Guru Granth Sahib.’ This was also the time

when Meharban Janamsakhi and Bhai Gurdas's first Var were written". [18] Despite his reluctance in hazarding a guess at an exact date, McLeod not only believed the *Bala* version to have "first emerged during the middle decades of the seventeenth century", but emphatically declared that "there can be no doubt that they represent an intermediate stage in the evolution of the form, and that others are accordingly more significant in terms of age and simplicity of structure". Yet, even "the 'Sceptical' historian in McLeod" [19] was forced to concede: "The claim that the Puratan version represents the oldest of all extant accounts may perhaps be accurate. It is certainly disputable, but the possibility must be acknowledged." [20]

More recently, western-based scholar, Prof Gurinder Singh Mann, has contested the currently accepted mid-seventeenth century date of the *Puratan* version. Toby Braden Johnson has noted that Mann "presented evidence of Puratan manuscripts dating from the late 1580s at a conference in 2009 at the University of California, Santa Barbara, which call into question the full extent of Guru Nanak's travels in the second stage of the janam-sakhi narrative". [21] In this respect, Mann offers the following chronological sequence for these *janam sakhis*:

Puratan (pre-1600), Miharban (pre-1620), and Bala (1648-1658). [22] The dates of the Puratan are suggestive of an early period in the history of the community, when the people who had met the Guru and had the opportunity to hear his message from himself may still have been around (*Guru Nanaku jin sunhia pekhia se phiri garbhahi na parai re*, M5, GG, 612). The evidence indicates that this text was created by someone who was part of the group that later emerged as the mainstream Sikh community. The possibility that the author of this text and some of his listeners knew Guru Nanak as a real person-who bathed, ate food, worked in the fields, rested at night, and had to deal with sons who were not always obedient-makes this text an invaluable source of information on the Guru's life. Unlike the Puratan, the importance of the Miharban and Bala Janam Sakhis falls in a different arena. Elaborating on the Puratan narrative, these two Janam Sakhis expand the scope of the Guru's travels and introduce a circle of people who would have made up the third and fourth generation of his followers. Whereas the farthest limit of travels to the east in Puratan is Banaras, Miharban extends the travels to Assam and Puri. Also as sectarian documents, they both reflect the points of view of the groups that created them and mirror the divisions within the community and the polemics involved in presenting the founder in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. [23] Given the variations in time of their origin and context of production, it is essential to study each of these texts separately to see what they have to offer on the Guru's life and the early Sikh community. [24]

On the whole, while it is true that research on the *janam sikhi* tradition is far from finalised, there nonetheless exist a significant number of Sikh and non-Sikh academics who hold the *Puratan* tradition to be older than Bala's. Moreover, despite Bala's popularity, the former slowly but surely gained ascendancy over the latter, at least among scholars, as the most authoritative and credible version. As McLeod recognised:

Having first emerged during the middle decades of the seventeenth century, the *Bala* tradition flourished increasingly during the eighteenth century and eventually secured its position as the standard version of the life of Nanak. This position it retained unchallenged until the rediscovery of the *Puratan* tradition late in the nineteenth century. The publication of Macauliffe's *The Sikh Religion* in 1909 eventually transferred the primary reputation to the *Puratan* version, but the *Bala* janam-sakhis yielded nothing in popularity and to this day they dominate the Panjabi market. [25]

There, then, exists an additional problem with the *Bala* version highlighted by the prominent non-Sikh historian, Hari Ram Gupta:

On its first page it is stated that it was dictated by Bhai Bala. It was written by Paida Mokha. It was read out to Guru Angad. On listening to the whole account, he observed that whoever would utter *Sat Bachan* (True statements) would go to heaven. ...

The writer of this Janam Sakhi says that it was written in Samvat 1582 Bikrami (1525 AD), **14 years before Guru Nanak's death.** [26] (bold ours)

This claim requires scrutiny since it is on this basis that some have boasted of it being the "original janam-sakhi". [27] In this regard, McLeod revealingly elaborates:

Although the reasons for this *Bala* ascendancy are not altogether clear, one which certainly played a major role was **its confident claim to represent an EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT of the life and travels of Baba Nanak.** All *Bala* janam-sakhis begin with a prologue which purports to describe the manner in which Bala Sandhu (commonly known as Bhai Bala) was summoned before Nanak's successor Angad and how he then proceeded to narrate all that he had witnessed as the first Guru's constant companion. The earliest of the extant *Bala* versions begins as follows:

The *Janam-patri* of Baba Nanakji

In the year Sammat fifteen hundred and eighty two, S. 1582, on the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Vaisakh, Paira Mokha, a Khatri of Sultanpur, wrote this book. Guru Angad commanded it to be written. Paira recorded the dictation of Bala, a Sandhu Jat who had come from Talvandi, the village of Rai Bhoi. He had come in search of Guru Angad. The recording of his account took two months and seventeen days to complete. All the facts and all the places visited by Guru Nanakji were faithfully and fluently described by Bhai Bala, with the result that Guru Angad was greatly pleased with him. Bhai Bala and Mardana the Bard accompanied Baba Nanak on his travels and Bhai Bala was with him during the period he spent at the commissariat [of Daulat Khan in Sultanpur]. [28]

The narrative then proceeds to describe how Guru Angad was one day sitting in his village of Khadur disconsolately reflecting upon the fact that he did not know Baba Nanak's date of birth. It so happened that **Bala Sandhu, the first Guru's companion**, had only recently learnt the identity of his Master's successor, and having discovered the location of Guru Angad's residence he arrived at this convenient moment to pay his respects. In response to a request from Guru Angad he agreed to go back to Talvandi and search for the horoscope (*janam-patri*) which had been recorded on Nanak's birth. When he returned triumphantly bearing the document it was discovered that the horoscope had been written in *Sastri* (*Nigari*) characters. Fortunately there lived in Sultanpur a Sikh named Paira Mokhi who knew 'both characters' and who could accordingly write Gurmukhi as well as read Nigari. Paira was duly summoned and having received the horoscope he sat down to transcribe it. [29], [30] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

However, Kirpal, McLeod and other academics almost all dismiss any notion of the *Bala JS* having been written **BEFORE** the compilation of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) in 1604 CE. As Kirpal explained:

It is probable that these *sakhis* were written **AFTER the compilation of *Guru Granth Sahib* by Guru Arjan in 1604 A.D.** ...

The fact that *Janamsakhis* and other related works came into existence after the compilation of the scripture in 1604 is **irrefutably established by the oldest available copy of *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Bala, dated 1658 A.D.**, which includes the hymns of Guru Arjan. There are many hymns of Guru Arjan in the *Puratan Janamsakhi* as well. If these *Janamsakhis* had been compiled/ written earlier, these could not have contained the hymns of Guru Arjan. [31] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

And as cited above, not only did McLeod hold that this tradition “first emerged during the middle decades of the seventeenth century”, but also reached the same conclusion as Kirpal observing:

The earliest of all dated *Bala* janam-sakhis is a manuscript in the possession of a Delhi family, an illustrated copy bearing the date S.1715 (A.D. 1658). [32], [33]

What is more, in Kirpal’s opinion: “Compared to the *Vilayatwali* text, its [Bala’s] language is of [a] much later period.” [34] Gupta agreed mentioning: “Its language is not the Panjabi of Guru Nanak’s time, but of the later period.”

In fact, Gupta went further by giving several reasons why said hagiography could not have been penned down during Guru Angad’s Guruship (1563-1606 CE). For one, he argued that it was not possible for it to have been recorded at the behest of and read out to Angad in 1525 CE, 14 years before Guru Nanak’s death, because significantly: “At that time Guru Angad had not come into contact with Nanak.” [35] McLeod made similar allusions: “The date of the alleged encounter between the two (A.D. 1525) must also arouse some suspicion. Nanak died in A.D. 1538 or 1539.” [36] Gupta additionally furnishes three strong reasons to further support his contention of it having been written “after 1650”:

1. This Janam Sakhi uses the word Wah-e-Guru (*Bolo Bhai Wah-e-Guru*). This term came into use in the time of Guru Ram Das, and was never used during Guru Nanak’s lifetime.
2. Bhai Bala’s Janam Sakhi speaks of Eminabad. In Nanak’s time the town was called Sayyidpur. It was destroyed by Babar. It sprang up again and was named Eminabad in the time of Emperor Akbar and Guru Arjan.
3. One story refers to Devlut Masand. As Masands were created by Guru Arjan, this Janam Sakhi could not have been written in the time of Guru Angad. [37]

Notwithstanding these persuasive arguments, there exists an equally compelling reason, proposed and accepted by a number of scholars, which raised serious doubt over its traditionally accepted authorship. McLeod explained:

A major objection to the *Bala* claim derives from the complete absence of any reference to Bhai Bala in the works of Bhai Gurdas (including his *Var XI* list of Guru Nanak’s more prominent disciples) or in any non-*Bala* janam-sakhi which predates the eighteenth century. Even the support offered by eighteenth-century janam-sakhis is of no consequence. The portions of the extant *Gyan-ratanavali* which refer to Bala are plainly later additions; and the sole reference in the earlier *Mahima Prakas* is far removed from any suggestion of regular

companionship. This situation could never have arisen if in fact Bhai Bala had occupied the position claimed on his behalf by the *Bala* janam-sakhis.

A second objection concerns the ineptly contrived nature of the explanatory prologue. **It would be altogether inconceivable that Guru Angad had never heard of one who had been a constant companion of Baba Nanak, or that the same companion should never have heard of his Master's successor. ...**

Although Bala himself may perhaps have been a real person, he could not have been a constant companion of the Guru in the manner claimed by the tradition which bears his name. His function within this tradition is manifestly that of lending it the measure of authenticity which would be required in order to establish its pretensions over those of other traditions. [38] (bold, underline ours)

This becomes all the more convincing when one pairs it with Kirpal's equally compelling argument which maintained that although it was "written in the *Bala* text that Bhai Bala ... was the Guru's friend of childhood", not only was such a claim "not supported by any other source", but more significantly while Bhai Gurdas made mention of Nanak's very well-known bard and life-long companion Mardana, "Bhai Bala does not figure anywhere". Kirpal further points out:

Even the *Vilayatwali* and the *Miharban* texts are also silent about him. **No other old source lends support to his existence.** All agree that Lehna remained with Guru Nanak for a minimum period of 3 years and a maximum period of 7-8 years. Therefore, he knew all the disciples and companions of the Guru. **It is surprising that neither Bhai Bala nor Guru Angad recognised each other.** The opening account of the *Bala* text clearly mentions that they did not know each other:

Bhai Bala yearned to have a glimpse of the Guru when Guru Angad came to limelight. Bala Sandhu had heard that Guru Nanak had nominated a Khatri, Angad by name, as his successor. His caste was Trehan, but he had hid himself at some unknown place. He heard that he lived at Khadoor Khehras. Bala Sandhu set out for Guru Angad's *darshan*. He brought offerings whatever he could afford. He found him sitting and making grass strings (*munj*). Bala Sandhu made his obeisance and Guru Angad spoke: "Bhai Bala Sat Karrar. Be seated." Guru Angad stopped making grass strings. He enquired from Bala wherefrom he had come, what brought him there and who he was. Then Bala Sandhu folded his hands and told the Guru that he was named Bala, got Sandhu, resident of Talwandi Rai Bhoe.

When Ernest Trump made a comparison of Bhai Bala *Janamsakhi* with the *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* in 1872, he made the following observations:

The later tradition which pretends to have knowledge of all the details of life of Nanak was therefore compelled to put forth as Voucher for its sundry tales and stories, Bhai Bala, who is said to have been the constant companion of Nanak, from his youth days up, whereas our old *Janamsakhi* does not even once name Bhai Bala. If Bhai Bala had been a constant companion of Nanak and a sort of mentor to him, as he appears now in the current *Janamsakhi*, it would be quite incomprehensible why never a single allusion should have been made of him in old tradition." [39], [40] (bold, underline ours)

Thus, based on the evidence currently available to them, many Sikh and non-Sikh scholars have given much less importance to the *Bala JS* in comparison to the *Puratan*. McLeod astutely recognised:

[T]o this day there still survives a conviction that the *Bala* tradition must be at least based upon an eyewitness account delivered in the presence of Guru Angad. This reputation it has retained in spite of numerous inconsistencies, a high incidence of fantasy, and a generally incoherent travel narrative. [\[41\]](#)

As such, he considered the *Bala* version to be “the **least trustworthy of ALL the janam sakhi traditions**. Errors of fact occur with considerable frequency and the fabulous material which it incorporates far exceeds that of the other janam sakhis, both in quantity and in degree” (bold, capitalisation ours). [\[42\]](#) While Kirpal collated:

Earlier to this, in 1904 A.D., Sewa Ram Singh the first biographer of Guru Nanak had stated in preface to his book *A Critical Study of the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak Dev*: “materials at our disposal are very chaotic and misleading” and of the numerous versions of *Bala Janamsakhi*, “none appears to be quite authentic.” Thereafter, M.A. Macauliffe scanned all the then extant versions of *Janamsakhis* and found therein fictitious narrations. He gave preference to the *Puratan* version because as he put it; “it contains much less mythological matter than any other Gurmukhi life of the Guru and is a much more rational, consistent and satisfactory narrative ... It is the product of legend and tradition which have been thought to be more trustworthy.” [\[43\]](#), [\[44\]](#)

With a more nuanced understanding of where we stand *vis-à-vis* the *Bala JS* and its historical standing within the scholarly circles, we are now in a better position to continue with our evaluation.

GHULAM AHMAD’S INFATUATION WITH NANAK

Ghulam Ahmad was essentially a product of an environment during “[t]he last two decades of the nineteenth century”, which, says Aslam Syed, “witnessed some of the most violently contested debates on religion between Hindus and Muslims”. [\[45\]](#) In this respect, Iqbal Singh Sevea states:

The emergence of the Ahmadiyya movement and its extensive use of the print media must be located within the ambit of the contestations of “public Islam”, and the attempts by various Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh revivalists groups to use the public media to propagate their views and attack their rivals in early twentieth century South Asia. The early development of the movement thus occurred in an environment characterized by the hardening of communal identities as a result of the policies of the colonial state,” and the need to respond to polemical publications produced by Christian missionary bodies in India. [\[46\]](#)

In addition, it was “under the British regime [that] the Christian missions strongly attacked indigenous religions with the support of the colonial power”, observes Munir Ahmed. To counter these missionary activities, Ghulam Ahmad, “emulating the methods and strategies of the Western missionaries, [] challenged his opponents to open debates and published numerous prophecies in order to prove the superiority of Islam over other religions”. [\[47\]](#)

As to the threat of the Hindus, then in Syed's view, this was no better exemplified than by Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883), a man who "emerged as the champion of the Vedic traditions"; founded the extremist group "Arya Samaj"; and published his *Satyarth Prakash* (1875), a tract that "denigrated other religions, especially Islam". Syed also highlights an example of interreligious violence that involved a devotee of Ahmad who killed Pandit Lekh Ram, [48] a follower of Saraswati who "started *dharm yudh* (religious war) against Muslims", for using "abusive language" against his prophet during a debate. Syed further divulged: "Many times such events led to widespread violence." [49]

Sevea also noted a threat towards Muslims "[w]ithin the context of the Punjab" where "Arya Samaj publications critiqued aspects of Islam and promoted the 'reconversion' of Muslims to Hinduism". [50] And though "Ghulam Ahmad's reliance on reasoned argument becomes especially apparent in his detailed attack on the Vedas and Arya Samaj teachings", in Spencer Lavan's view he employed an altogether different strategy against the Sikhs:

When he turned his attention to the Sikhs, however, he used different sources to demonstrate that Guru Nanak was a Muslim. Ghulam Ahmad often turned to European writers to buttress his arguments about Guru Nanak or the death of Jesus. Despite the fact that Ahmad knew no European languages, the use of these techniques suggests his familiarity with modern methods of argument prevalent among missionaries and institutionalised by western educational techniques. [51]

Yet, in his endeavour to counter the missionary activities of his opponents, Ahmad ended up taking extreme measures that rightly earned him the ire of the very religious community he apparently sought to defend after announcing his prophethood and pronouncing himself to be the long-awaited Messiah. Hence, of all the outlandish theories Ahmad invented in his desperate attempt at proving his heresies, arguably his most absurd was predicated on the assumption that the major religions had a divine origin while their respective founders were all true emissaries of God. He thus said:

There is no doubt, however, that Sri Krishna [of Hinduism] was a Messenger and a representative of God in his time, and God conversed with him. Likewise, from among the Hindu people of the Latter Days was one named Baba Nanak, whose saintliness has become a byword in this country. ... Baba Sahib openly claims to be the recipient of revelation in the *Janam Sakhis* and the *Granth*. In one *Janam Sakhi* **he states that he had received revelation from God testifying to the truth of Islam. Based on this he performed Hajj and followed the Islamic injunctions METICULOUSLY**. ... It goes without question that Baba Nanak was a holy and pious man. He was one of those whom God, the Mighty, the Glorious, made drink out of His goblet of love. He was born among Hindus only to bear witness that Islam is from God. ... Guru Baba Nanak also claimed to be a recipient of revelation from God and he enjoyed the Divine blessing of showing many miracles. Thus he roundly debunked the erroneous claims that there was no revelation after the Vedas or that no signs were manifested thereafter. [52] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

As one would expect, the Ahmadiyya continue to propagate their messiah's assertion that "Baba" Nanak was a Muslim. The problem is that there are two reasons why the term Muslim loses any real value and meaning when used by the Ahmadiyya.

The first is that despite there being only one valid model of Islam, its adherents, who represent the second largest religious community on the planet, comprise a diverse range of

socio-cultural and -ethnic backgrounds made up of a plethora of sects and parties. Hence, Muslims are anything but a single monolithic bloc.

The second reason is that although they have shamelessly usurped and identified themselves as Muslims, Ghulam Ahmad and his movement were declared non-Muslims for rejecting Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) as the final Prophet of God and refusing to believe that divine revelation permanently ended with him.

Hence, if the term Muslim is being understood and applied in this case as a synonym for a Qadiani, then Nanak certainly cannot be called a Muslim in the orthodox sense of the word. And if, *arguendo*, Nanak is being identified with orthodoxy, then the question of what type of Muslim he was still remains to be answered. This question becomes all the more relevant when one realises that not only is this what the Ahmadiyya are contending, but also some naïvely mistaken and arrogantly deluded Muslims too.

THE SUFI SIDE OF GURU NANAK

In fact, the Ahmadiyya's contention in this respect has been altogether too ambiguous in that they either consider Nanak to be "a holy and pious man", [\[53\]](#) as Ahmad did, or allude to him being a "Sufi". For instance, Saleem Ahmad Malik proposed:

A more satisfactory evaluation of Guru Nanak is probably to regard him as a mystic and a Sufi who had realised the ultimate Unity in existence, who always spoke of "The One without a second". [\[54\]](#)

While Abdul Jaleel alleged:

It was a Muslim Sufi he constantly turned to for advice and there is not a single instance in his life which indicated that he bowed his head to a Hindu pandit," and that "Nanak was looked upon as a Muslim Sufi by his contemporaries. [\[55\]](#)

But the problem now is that the term Sufi is just as loose as the term Muslim precisely because Sufism as a group is, like the rest of the Muslim world, far from being monolithic and uniform. Thus, labelling Nanak a Sufi does nothing to answer the question of what type of Muslim he was except shift the problem back one step to what kind of a Sufi he was.

Those who have endeavoured to study the varied opinions expressed *vis-à-vis* the possible source(s) of and potential influences on Nanak's socio-political, -religious and ideological worldview, will know that the Ahmadiyya were neither the first nor the last in suggesting Sufism as an answer. In our case, however, it is imperative to identify any philosophical and ideological similarities between Nanak and any Sufi sects not just to ascertain the degree of influence had, but to also determine any degree of conformity with orthodox Islam.

Scholars are agreed that Nanak spent a considerable length of time during his early years of childhood in the company of Sufis including suggestions that he may have even been taught by one. For example, Prof Abdul Haq Ansari stated:

It is often forgotten that the formative years of Guru Nanak's life were passed in a land whose "towns and villages were honeycombed with Muslim saints and faqirs. Panipat, Sirhind. Pakpattan, Mullan and Uch were places where famous Sufi Shaikhs had spent their

lives, and the names of Baba Farid, Ala-ul-Haq, Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari, Makhdum Jahaniyan, Shaikh Ismail Bukhari had become household words for piety and devotion.” From childhood onwards till the time Guru Nanak developed his concepts, he constantly imbibed Islamic ideas through his teacher Mulla Qutbuddin and through discourses with Shaikh Sharaf, Shaikh Ibrahim and several other Sufis. [\[56\]](#)

Prof Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi similarly advances:

In his early life, he was inquisitive beyond his age, was given to profound meditation and was exceedingly humane. His critical acumen and balanced judgement helped him to carve out an outstanding place for himself in an environment overflowing with mystical thought and spiritual attainments. As he belonged to a literate family, neatly placed in the service of the Afghan governors of the Punjab, he must have listened to verses of Rumi, Sa’di, Hafiz and Jami in his own home environment and the thought of the great mystic poets would have aroused his interest in Divine love, grace and mercy. As his understanding of the Supreme Being matured and his experience increased, he felt himself endowed with a sort of Divine inspiration which made his thought pattern unique and gave him a serene self-confidence. [\[57\]](#)

The most convincing evidence, however, of a shared philosophy between Sufism and Nanakian thought is via the well-known thirteenth century Sufi, Khwaja Fariduddin Mas’ud Ganjshakar (d. 1265CE). Better known as Baba Farid or Sheikh Farid, this so-called mystic resided in the Punjab region of South Asia and belonged to the popular Sufi order called the Chishtis, or Chishtiyyah. What set him apart from other celebrated Sufi mystics, who shared similar beliefs and practices, was that 134 of his hymns (*shabads*) were chosen by Nanak for inclusion in what would later become the *Adi Granth* – Sikhism’s first compilation of a scriptural canon prepared by the fifth Guru, Arjan.

The Sufis [of Hindustan] adopted Hindu ceremonies, devotional songs, and yoga techniques. Popular religious culture became a mixture of Muslim and Hindu practices.

But what convinced Nanak to honour Baba Farid in this way? Was the reason as straightforward as a shared Islamic identity or is there more to this than the simplistic narrative so often parroted by the Ahmadiyya and some Muslims?

To correctly answer this question, including determining the true theological relationship between Nanak and his apparent predecessor Farid, it is essential to accurately understand not only the general introduction of Islam into Indian society and culture, but also more specifically the establishment and spread of Sufism throughout the country and especially the region of Punjab from where the pair originated.

SUFISM’S INTRODUCTION TO INDIA

The introduction of Islam, or more accurately a particular version of it, into the rich and diverse society of India led to an inevitable syncretic fusion of socio-religious and -cultural norms. According to Prof Romila Thapar:

The coming of the Arabs, Turks and Afghans brought a new religion to India that found roots in various ways in many communities. Islam was unable to create a homogeneous, monolithic community, and in this it was conditioned by the same segmentation that earlier

religions in India had experienced. Apart from the Muslim theologians, **an early impact of Islam was the arrival of Muslim mystics from Persia**, distinct from and sometimes disapproved of by Muslim theologians. [\[58\]](#) (bold ours)

In the words of Prof Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, these “Indian Sufis followed, broadly speaking, the pattern of development that had evolved in Persia”. [\[59\]](#) And what evolved in Persia was, again broadly speaking, a form of heterodoxy that was clearly at odds with orthodoxy.

Hujjat Allah Javani delineates a number of prominent Sufi mystics below who were responsible for said introduction:

Sufism emerged in the Indian subcontinent in the second/ eighth and third/ninth centuries. Accounts are available of the meeting between Abu ‘Ali Sindi and Bayazid Bastami (d. 261/874 or 264/ 877; ‘Aziz Ahmad, Pers. tr., p. 51); Hallaj’s (d. 309/921) travel to India to propagate his teachings (Schimmel, 1983, Pers. tr., p. 67); the alleged stay of the first Sufi, viz. Shaykh Safi ‘I-Din Kaziruni (d. 398/1007) in the Sind region of Och (Akram, p. 72) on the instructions of his spiritual master, Shaykh Abu Ishaq Kaziruni (Ibrahim ibn Shahriyar); Shaykh Husayn Zanjani’s (d. 420/1029) journey to Punjab and his consequent stay in that region for spreading Sufism and for nurturing spiritual disciples; and the trip of ‘Ali ibn ‘Uthman Hujwiri to Punjab on the instructions of his spiritual master, Abu al-Fadl Khatli (or Khuttali; Rizvi, Pers. tr., vol. 1, p. 112; Rahman ‘Ali, p. 59). Moreover, the eminent Sufi, Hujwiri, had also built a Sufi monastery (*khanaqah*) in Lahore where he taught and guided students of the spiritual path and where he finally passed away (Rahman ‘Ali, *ibid.*). [\[60\]](#)

These controversial Sufis – from Bastami, Mansur Al-Hallaj, to Kaziruni, Hujwiri and other such characters – were all Persians in origin. It is, therefore, entirely understandable why Frederic Pincott, when discussing this subject in his entry on Sikhism in the *Dictionary of Islam*, correctly called the mystical and spiritual beliefs of “[t]he Persian conquerors of Hindustan” as “the **Islamo-Magian** creed” (bold, underline ours) before repeating:

It was through Persia that India received its flood of Muhammadanism; and the mysticism and asceticism of the Persian form of Islam found congenial soil for development among the speculative ascetics of northern India. [\[61\]](#)

Another important figure who influenced, to a smaller or larger extent, practically all Sufi orders was arguably the most controversial of them all – the Andalusian Sufi, Ibn ‘Arabi, of whom Prof Ira Lapidus said: “Apart from the Quran and hadith, the most important religious influence on Indian Islam was the teaching of Ibn al-‘Arabi and the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*, the unity of being.” [\[62\]](#) While in Burhan Ahmad Faruqi’s view:

It was Ibn ‘Arabi who seems to have been the first to interpret his own mystic experience of Tawhid, or unity in such a way as to be intelligible to others, and to have strenuously maintained that Wahdat-i-Wujud is the very essence of Islam. And Ibn ‘Arabi tried to support his interpretation with verses of the Quran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet. Ibn ‘Arabi has had enormous influence on mystic thought in Islam. [\[63\]](#)

When these heretical ideas came into contact with those of India, a mutation occurred whereby “[t]he amalgamation of Indian and Islamic mysticism evolved into new schools of Sufism different from those in Persia”. [\[64\]](#) This, continues Thapar, led to the following:

Sufi ideas attracted an interest in India, particularly among those inclined to mystic teachings and asceticism, since much of the symbolism was similar. Their dialogue with the *bhakti* movement was to the advantage of both, as they questioned orthodoxy in their explorations of the meaning of religion and of the human condition. They attracted large followings which gave them a political potential that converted their *khanqahs* or hospices into centres of political discussion as well. [65]

Consequently, this accretion not only led to the already considerable gap with orthodoxy to widen even further, but also opened the doors for these Sufi groups to justify compromising on and accommodating those theological beliefs of Hinduism that would, under normal circumstances, have necessarily been rejected by orthodox Islam. Prof Mushirul Haq gives an example of just such a compromise:

Muslims, therefore, once settled in India began to adopt those local customs which they found were not in contradiction to their faith. Some which could be considered un-Islamic were rather 'Islamised' after the community took to them. For example Islam did not allow the saint worship but, once in India, the mausoleums of Muslim saints and men of God began to attract Hindus and Muslims in the same way as the *samadhh* of Hindu saints were drawing Hindu multitudes. It was not, however, a one-sided journey. Hindu community also, naturally, underwent a tremendous cultural and religious change. In any Hindu reform movement such as the Bhakti movement, or in Sikhism, various Islamic elements can quite easily be detected. In their language, mode of living, the habits and manners, both the communities owe so much to each other that compared with their traditional way of life both of them, even though religiously different from each other, have now culturally become almost one community. [66]

As for the region of Punjab, then Majid Ali Khan explains:

Later, all the famous Sufi orders viz. Qadiriyyah, Naqshbandiyah, and Shattariyyah etc, entered into the Punjab and the land became a great centre of Sufis and divines The Punjab attracted masses from all over India and became a feeder and tributary [sic] stream of Knowledge, Wisdom, Sufism and spirituality for all the natives of the country. By the fifteenth century a number of Punjab's towns like Pakpattan, Multan, Uchh, Sirhind, Panipat etc. became centres of the Sufis. These were the places "where famous Sufi Shaikhs had spent their lives and, and the names of Baba Farid, 'Ala-ul-Haq, Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari, Makhdum Jahaniyan, Shaikh Isma'il Bukhari, had become household words for piety and devotion. [67]

And while not forgetting the Chishtiyyah to whom Baba Farid Ganjshakar belonged, these groups were then guilty, to a greater or lesser degree, of slowly but surely spreading their poison across the region. Lapidus says in this regard:

These teachings [i.e. Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*] were spread both by the Chistis and the Shattaris, who believed that spiritual attitude was more important than specific religious laws or practices. They also saw that Islam and Hinduism shared spiritual insights, and this led to **an assimilation of Sufi and Hindu beliefs** about the control of emotional life as a prerequisite to the control of external behavior. **The Sufis ADOPTED Hindu ceremonies, devotional songs, and yoga techniques. Popular religious culture became a mixture of Muslim and Hindu practices.** Thus, the Sufis were divided among monist, pantheist, and syncretist religious tendencies, between commitment to individual

spirituality and collective Shari'a, and between universal Muslim practices and specific Indian forms of worship.

Sufism was closely connected to the vernacular languages; Sufis pioneered the absorption of Indian language, music, and poetic forms into Islamic practice. [68] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

There is then Baba Farid's Sheikh, Khwaja Qutb-u'd-din Bakhtiyar Kaki (ob. 633 A.H./1235 A.D.), who, Prof Khaliq Ahmad Nizami says, "was a native of Aush which was a great centre of the Hallajis [69] and was considerably influenced by the Wujudi [70] doctrines". [71]

Nizami further adds:

The Muslim mystics, however, rose to the occasion and released syncretic forces which liquidated social, ideological and linguistic barriers between the various culture-groups of India and helped in the development of a common cultural outlook. As their *Khanqahs* were the only places where people of different shades of opinion, professing different religions and speaking different languages met, **these *Khanqahs* became veritable centres of cultural synthesis where ideas were freely exchanged and a common medium for this exchange was evolved.** [72] (bold ours)

As Rizvi highlights, "the confrontation of the tantrics, sadhus and siddhas, represented in Persian works by the general term Yogis, and the Sufis became a familiar phenomenon in the thirteenth-century religious life in India" to the point that these lively day-to-day interactions invariably affected the thoughts and ideas of both parties:

The *khanaqah* of Shaikh Farid-al-Din Ganj-i-Shakar (died A.D. 1265) **was subjected to fertilization and cross-fertilization by the philosophy and practices of the Yogis.** Not even a Sufi so eminent as Shaikh Nizam-al-Din Auliya (died A.D. 1325) **could remain UNINFLUENCED** Shaikh Nizam-al-Din Auliya listened with attention to the magical and mystical aspects of sex mysticism, as explained by a Yogi visiting the *khanaqah* of Shaikh Farid-al-Din Ganj-i-Shakar. [73] Another disciple of Shaikh Farid asked a Yogi, who was a guest in the *khanaqah*, to prescribe him drugs for growing long hair. [74], [75] (bold, capitalisation ours)

Muslims, therefore, once settled in India began to adopt those local customs which they found were not in contradiction to their faith. Some which could be considered un-Islamic were rather 'Islamised' after the community took to them. For example Islam did not allow the saint worship but, once in India, the mausoleums of Muslim saints and men of God began to attract Hindus and Muslims.

In addition, he speaks of the "influence of Sufism on the various regional languages and dialects of northern India, then collectively known as Hindawi, [as] far-reaching" explaining:

Through Hindawi music there penetrated into Sufism the subtle message of the Vaishnavite *bhakti* with its popular symbols. Shaikh Farid-al-Din Ganj-i-Shakar seems to have conversed in the local dialect of Hindawi with the Yogis who used to visit the *khanaqah*. He is thought to have composed Hindawi verses and the Guru Granth incorporates 112 of his *slokas* which fact, however, remains to be proved conclusively that they were his work.

Hindawi songs were regularly recited at the *sama* ' of many Sufis. A Shaikh, Ahmad Naharwani, who attended the *sama* ' of such eminent Sufis as Shaikh Qutb-al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki (died A.D. 1235), recited melodious Hindawi songs. By the end of the fourteenth century, if not before, Hindawi verses came to be quoted in the gatherings at mosques. [76]

Rizvi continues:

In the fifteenth century, the introduction of the Shattari and the Qadiri orders into India, the approach of the Islamic millennium, and the impact of the north Indian *sants* (saints) who tried to synthesize the traditions of the Vaishnavite *bhakti*, the Nath Yogis, and the Sufis, transformed Sufism into a complex pattern.

The Shattaris, who traced their origin from Shaikh Bayazid Bistami, reoriented their founder's traditions concerning the quest for the Absolute Truth and rapturous infatuation with the Divine love. Shaikh Abd Allah Shattari (died A.D. 1485), after travelling through many Islamic countries, finally settled down in Mandu, the capital of the Sultans of Malwa. He introduced the movement into India, but it owes its popularity to Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth (died A.D. 1562-63). The Shattaris popularized the invocation of the names of God (*Da 'wat-i-Asma* ') as a means of gaining spiritual power. The Hindi poetry produced by the followers of this order promoted interest in Hindu mythology and in the works of the Indian saints. [77]

The approach of the Islamic millennium accounts for the success of the Mahdawi movement and further popularity of the ideologies of Ibn-al- 'Arabi which Shaikh Aman of Panipat (died A.D. 1550-51) preached with exuberant imagination.

The Qadiri order, firmly introduced into India in the fifteenth century, nourished in Multan and Uch and, subsequently, in Lahore. From about 1450, Saharanpur, Panipat and Multan became important Sufi centres. [78]

In light of all the above, what becomes apparent is that Sufism eventually carved out a unique identity for itself by successfully managing to adapt to its peculiar surroundings. In the northern region of the country where Nanak had entered his formative years during the latter half of the fifteenth century, Sufism had, as a collective order, firmly established itself as an influential religious movement.

Having, thus, provided a brief overview of Sufism's introduction into India, the next stage is to better understand the specifics of the heresies that were taught by the likes of Baba Farid and many other Sufis, and how this relates back to Nanak.

THE HERESIES OF THE SUFIS OF INDIA

In order to ascertain the type of Muslim Nanak is alleged to have been, it is vitally important to pinpoint the major doctrinal strands of Sufism that were carried over and propagated by those said to have been associated with the founder of Sikhism. In this respect, the most obvious person to begin with would have to be Baba Farid and the Chishtiyyah Sufi order he belonged to. As stated earlier, this order, similar to other parallel strands of Sufi orders in and around the vicinity of Punjab, was guilty of entertaining the Wujudi concept made famous by Ibn 'Arabi. Ibn 'Arabi himself was merely a cog, albeit a large one, in a movement that first arose a few centuries earlier and whose origin and evolution Rizvi details below:

In the early centuries of Islam, the Sufis led an ascetic life, of self-denial, poverty and detachment. Their life was geared to the spiritualization of Islam from within; they tended to resolve conflicts in the meta-physics and ethics of formal religion through their own intuition, not through reasoned argument. Gradually, the impact of the mysticism of the Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and Mahayanist Buddhists and the influence of Iranian, Syrian, Greek and Roman cultures and traditions transformed Sufism into a complex system. ...

Between the ninth and twelfth centuries of the Christian era, political upheaval and social turmoil plunged the Islamic world into confusion and profoundly affected the development of Sufism. ... [M]en began to seek new formulas in which to express the realities of a political and social situation far more intricate than in the early centuries of Islam.

The first important figure in the history of speculative Sufism was Bayazid Bistami (died A.D. 874), a Persian Muslim of Zoroastrian ancestry, who spelled out his mystical experiences without any men. [\[79\]](#)

To put it more lucidly, what Rizvi has outlined above only supports the contention that by the time Sufism found its way to India, it had already undergone radical and significant changes from the pure and pristine message originally presented by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); and Ibn ‘Arabi, of course, was a major contributor for said change:

Infinitely controversial but of far-reaching importance was Ibn ‘Arabi’s theory of the transcendental Unity of Being, or oneness of Being, *Wahdat-al-Wujud*. He reinterpreted earlier theories on the Unity of Being and made his the **last word on the subject**. He and his followers brought all their scholarship and energy to bear upon a restatement of the theory of the Perfect Man. According to them, the Perfect Man is “a man who has fully realized his essential oneness with the Divine Being in whose likeness he is made.” In the literature produced by them, prophets are not the only perfect men; saints and eminent holy men, too, have been made the repositories of ‘Divine Reality’ and ‘Divine Illumination.’ [\[80\]](#) (bold ours)

Faruqi elucidates further on Ibn ‘Arabi’s innovated (*bid’ah*) concept of *Wahdat-al-Wujud*, which is also referred to by many Sufis as *Tawheed al-Wujudi*:

IBN ‘ARABI’S position with regard to Tawhid is that: Being is one, it is that which exists. This Being is Allah. Everything else is His manifestation. Hence the world is identical with Allah. The identity of the world and Allah is conceived on the basis of the identity of His Dhat-o-Sifat [\[81\]](#) or existence and essence substance and attribute; the world being only a Tajalli [\[82\]](#) or manifestation of His Sifat or attributes. In other words, the creation of the world is a form of emanation. [\[83\]](#) The theory of emanation as held by Ibn ‘Arabi and especially as elaborated by his followers as well as the later mystics, e.g., Jami, is this. [\[84\]](#)

Rizvi thus concludes:

With such minds at work on it, the ideological and philosophical foundation of Sufism **passed beyond the range of the ordinary Muslim’s understanding**. ... In all Sufi orders, members lived lives of poverty and abstinence The offerings dropped by the pious into the alms-basket (*zambil*), as it was carried around, and the unsolicited gifts presented at the

khanaqah (the communal abode) were the sole source of support for all orders [85] (bold ours)

Again, reading between the lines, what Rizvi is implying by suggesting that Sufism passed beyond the range of the ordinary Muslim's understanding is that it reached a state that bore little resemblance to the original. Hence, concepts alien to Islam *à la* the so-called *Tawheed al-Wujudi* were unsurprisingly denounced by the orthodox, as Rizvi acknowledges:

Muslim scholastic classes, collectively styled '*Ulama*', offered strong opposition to the Sufis, using their influence over the administrative machinery of the State to harass them. **They denounced the ascetic life of the Sufis as un-Islamic**, and opposed their practice of arousing a state of ecstasy through music (*sama* '). [86] (bold ours)

In fact, it is worth noting, as Faruqi does, that the concept of *Tawheed al-Wujudi* is so far removed from the realms of Islamic acceptability that even the famous Sufi jurist of the heterodox Naqshbandi Sufi order, Ahmad al-Sirhindi (d. 1624 CE), condemned it as blasphemy:

In the end he [Sirhidhi] comes to realise that to speak of an experience of God, which the mystics do, is blasphemy. God is far and far above the grasp of our faculty of reason and of *kashf* ... Allah is beyond the Beyond, and again beyond the Beyond. Neither His being nor His attributes are directly knowable. [87]

Nor is the world the *tajalli* or emanation of the *sifat* or attributes. For if the world were the *tajalli* of God's *sifat*, it would have been identical with them; but the *sifat* are perfect while the world is full of imperfections. For example, human knowledge has no resemblance with God's knowledge, so that one may be called the *tajalli* of the other. [88]

Thus, Faruqi concludes: "Wahdat-i-Wujud or unityism is not true, wujud or Being is not one, insists the Mujaddid." [89]

Faruqi adds that even the celebrated Pakistani poet and philosopher, "Sir Muhammad Iqbal [90] also protested against Wahdat-i-Wujud of the mystics, gave Islamic morality a new spirit and preached life of Effort and Activity". [91], [92]

It is also worth noting Dr Adwaita Ganguly's observation of the famous English novelist, E.M. Forster, who recognised, while reviewing Iqbal's *The Secrets of the Self (Asrar-I-Khudi)*, that "in broad terms" the "religious temperament" of the Muslims in India "has been influenced since the eleventh century onwards by two theories about the nature of God". These included:

The first theory, which follows from the Koran, emphasizes that Allah is God, and He is a Creator who creates things out of nothing by a sheer act of will. Allah is primarily transcendent, though also immanent in close personal touch with the Universe and Man, and infinitely exalted above His creatures. "Say Allah is one. Allah is He on Whom all depend, He begets not, nor is He begot- ten: and none is like Him" – the Meccan Sura (Chapter 112) gives in a nutshell the essence of Koranic monotheism. Forster found in Iqbal, whom he met in 1916, and whose writings he reviewed in 1920, a firm believer in this theory. He wrote:

It is not the mysticism that seeks union with God. On this point the poet is emphatic. We shall see God perhaps. We shall never be God. For God, like ourselves, has a Self, and he created us not out of himself but out of nothing. Iqbal dislikes the pantheism which he saw all around him in India – for instance, in Tagore – and he castigates those Moslem teachers who have infected Islam with it. It is weakening and wrong to seek unity with the divine. Vision – perhaps. Union – no. [\[93\]](#)

God, usually conceived of as a Creator, stands over and above the Universe, which is believed to be His creation – this type of theory generally lays stress on the difference of nature between God and the created spirits. It gives one the feeling that it is not possible to establish a direct relation with God, Who is a distant and All-powerful Ruler of the destinies of mankind.

The other theory, known as the doctrine of Sufi Pantheism, conceives of the Universe itself as God. God exists in everything through different objects may reveal His nature to a greater or lesser extent. This view is made popular by the mystics known as Sufis, “the name being taken from the garments of white wool (suf) worn by the earliest ascetics”: [\[94\]](#)

Towards the end of the ninth century of the Christian era and the beginning of the tenth, pantheistic ideas begin to appear in Sufism, of a spiritualistic type. These pantheistic mystics held that God, the One Reality, dwelling in solitude, desired to share His Reality with others, to manifest His Beauty to those whom He created, and this led to the doctrine of Divine universality and of an absolute Unity, which maintained that the glory of God is to be found in all things, but in varying degrees. So the One Reality, God, was believed to dwell and manifest itself everywhere and not least in the human soul, while this world was held to be but the mirror in which True Being was reflected. This pantheistic aspect of Sufism was developed first in Persia. [\[95\]](#), [\[96\]](#)

This last point regarding the pantheistic side of Sufism originating in Persia is also supported by Pincott who stated:

Now, Sufism is not, as Dr. Trumpp supposes, due to Hindu pantheism; for it arose in the very earliest days of Muhammadanism, and is almost certainly due to the influence of Persian Zoroastrianism on the rude faith of Arab Islamism. Persia has ever been the stronghold of Sufiistic doctrine; and the leading writers who have illustrated that form of Muhammadanism have been the Persian poets Firdusi, Nizami, Sa’di, Jalalu ‘d-Din, Hafiz, and Jami. Hafiz, the prince of Sufi poets, boldly declares: “I am a disciple of the old Magian: be not angry with me, Shaikh! For thou gavest me a promise; he hath brought me the reality.” Although this stanza alludes directly to two persons known to Hafiz, its almost obvious meaning is: “I, a Persian adhere to the faith of my ancestors. Do not blame me, Arab conqueror, that my faith is more sublime than thine.” That Hafiz meant his readers to take his words in a general sense, may be inferred from the stanza in which he says: “I am the servant of the old man of the tavern (i.e. the Magian); because his beneficence is lasting: on the other hand, the beneficence of the Shaikh and of the Saiyid at times is, and at times is not.” Indeed, Hafiz was fully conscious of the fact that Sufiism was due to the influence of the faith of his ancestors; for, in another ode, he plainly says: “Make fresh again the essence of the creed of Zoroaster, now that the tulip has kindled the fire of Nimrod.” And Nizami, also, was aware that his ideas were perilously akin to heterodoxy; for, he says in his *Khusru wa Shirin*: “See not in me the guide to the temple of the Fire-worshippers; see only the hidden meaning which

cleaveth to the allegory.” These citations, which could be indefinitely multiplied, sufficiently indicate the Zoroastrian origin of the refined spirituality of the Sufis. [\[97\]](#)

Hence, what ought to be beyond doubt is that Sufism cannot be traced as much back to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as it can to Persia where Zoroastrianism once predominated. More specifically, the concept of pantheism and the notion of man’s potential of achieving spiritual union with God on a par with, or worse yet, greater than (as some Sufis have contended) the Prophets, has zero grounding in orthodoxy. And as Faruqi points out, it was this latter belief that dominated the spiritual pursuits of the Sufis and served as their *modus operandi*:

But what the Islamic mystics consciously held is this: Mysticism is an attempt to have a firsthand experience of what the Prophet of Islam is supposed to have experienced. The Islamic mystic believes that the Prophet experienced God and Eternity. The mystic is out to experience them himself. He adopts certain practices called “Mujahida” or spiritual exercises. On his way he believes he acquires certain occult powers to work Karamat, miracles. With these we are not concerned. However it must be borne in mind that in all this he tries to keep to Islam and its spirit. What interests us is the third element of mysticism, *viz.* “Kashf-o-Ilham” or intuition of God and Eternity. The mystic believes that he comes to apprehend eternal verities and God directly. This is what is also known as religious experience. The subject comes, so to say, in direct contact with Divine Being. He has immediate vision of God. The result is “Haqq-ul Yaqin” [\[98\]](#) the infallible certainty of His existence and His essence. The competence and validity of Kashf-o-Ilham as the faculty cognisant of Divine Being is assumed without question; and it is maintained that Kashf is qualitatively different from reason. It is the direct apprehension of ultimate Reality. [\[99\]](#)

Their pantheistic conception of God and nature coupled with the belief that direct experience of the divine was not limited to the Prophets alone, but open to all and sundry – what Ganguly called “the doctrine of Divine universality” – and which ultimately led to them rejecting the fundamental dichotomy affirmed by the orthodox of dividing the world into the two basic categories: Muslims (believers) and non-Muslims (disbelievers). As indicated above, the sole reason for this dissolution was entirely down to the process of social accretion that saw the Sufis slowly assimilated into their surroundings, i.e. Hinduism. As Rizvi grants:

The use of the local dialects, both by the Sufis and the *sants*, made ideas such as Absolute Reality, Creative Truth, faith in the love and grace of God and **the equality of mankind** popular with all sections of the population of northern India. [\[100\]](#) (bold ours)

While Ganguly accurately opines:

Sufis believe “that the souls of men differ infinitely in degree, but not all in kind, from the Divine Spirit, whereof they are particles, and wherein they will ultimately be absorbed.” [\[101\]](#) They combine the old Neo-Platonic idea of the Universal soul working through the various spheres of being, [\[102\]](#) with the Vedantic concept of the ultimate absorption of the individual soul in the Absolute. Like the Vedantists, they also lay stress on the theme that man’s attachment to worldly desires comes in the way of his realization of his divine goal. [\[103\]](#)

Haq was, therefore, entirely correct in succinctly concluding: “The Sufis were of the opinion that the truth was found in every religion.” [\[104\]](#)

As to the shared idea of God's universal love, then in this respect Hanif identifies a correspondence between Sufism and the Bhakti movement:

Love is at the centre of high Sufistic experience, as of Bhakti with which it holds numerous parallels. ... In the later phases of Sufism and Bhakti, the love theme is presented with an abandon and elaboration in some of the great Poetry of the world, in Persian and numerous Indian languages. In the earlier phase, to which Sheikh Farid belongs, while this passion is still an integral part of the Sufistic experience, its expression is terse and intense, owing to the predominance of asceticism in the way of Sufism. ...

As in the poetry of Bhakti, the seeker is figured as the yearning female, seeking fulfilment in the spouse, the Beloved Lord. This mood has given rise to great poetry in Bhakti no less than in Indian Sufism. [\[105\]](#)

As a matter of fact, these "new trends", as Rizvi designates them, went so far that "despite the opposition of the orthodox sections", these Sufis "made *Thakur*, *Dhani* and *Kartar*", non-Islamic names of the Deity, "synonymous with Allah. **The *sant* and the Sufi terminologies became interchangeable and the term Sufi became coeval and coexistent with the term *sant***" (bold ours).

Rizvi then makes mention of another figure closely associated to Sikhism:

The fame of Kabir, who occupies a very important place among the *sants* of northern India invested the Sufi concept of a *muwahhid* (monotheist) with a special significance.

Once Shaikh Rizq Allah asked his father, Shaikh Sa'd Allah, 'Was the famous Kabir, whose verses everyone recites, a Muslim or a *kafir*?' His father said. 'He was a *muwahhid*.' Shaikh Rizq Allah further asked. 'Is a *muwahhid* different from a *kafir* or a Muslim?' Shaikh Sa'd Allah replied, 'It is difficult to understand this truth, you will gradually learn it.' [\[106\]](#)

Kabir is another saint whose writings (the authenticity of which are disputed) were included in the SGGs. In the above citation, it is not the question of Kabir's Muslim identity that is of concern, but rather the irregular use of the very particular and concretised title *muwahhid*. The same term, reveals Ashraf Mirani, is used by "Khawaja Ya'qub, a son of Baba Farid, [who] defined it as follows:

"The *muwahhid* is he whose main concern is good action. Whatever he does aims at seeking divine grace. Water does not drown him and fire doesn't burn him. Absorbed in *Tawhid* (*Wahdat al-Wujud*) he is in a state of self-effacement. A sufi or a lover belonging to this category is concerned with nothing. If he makes a quest for himself, he finds God, if he seeks God, he finds himself. When the lover is completely absorbed in the Beloved, the attributes of the lover and Beloved become identical." [\[107\]](#), [\[108\]](#)

What is apparent is that the fusion of beliefs, ideas and terminologies of the saints and Sufis inexorably led to the conceptual corruption of the term *muwahhid* until it acquired a peculiarly odd definition that necessarily involved an affirmation of the notion of *Tawhid al-Wujud*.

Given that this title was applied to both Farid and Kabir, it is unsurprising to learn that some, including Rizvi, [\[109\]](#) held that "**Guru Nanak belonged to this group of distinguished**

muwahhids, whose spiritual experience transcended the orthodox Hindu and Muslim idiom” [\[110\]](#) (bold, underline ours).

The conceptual comparisons are, in fact, so distinct that some Sikh academics openly accept, as Dr Manjit Singh Ahluwalia does, that not only had Sufism “profoundly influenced the Indian society and culture”, but also “influenced Sikhism more on practical side than on the side of its theoretical teachings”.

Ahluwalia also makes mention of the cultural crosspollination that occurred which included the interchangeable terminologies adopted by the Bhaktis and the Sufis:

Most of the founders of religious sects (including Sikhism) made the best use of their knowledge of Sufism and used the Sufi terminologies to preach their views. This undoubtedly helped in stimulating the Indian religious movements. **Influence of Sufism is quite evident in the teachings of Guru Nanak, Kabir, Dadu and other saints of Bhakti movement in medieval India.** ...

Guru Nanak took from Quran and Sufi literature a good many terms and symbolic expressions, like sidak, sabar, hukm, nadir, mehar, karam (grace), etc. (bold ours)

He additionally notes:

It is pertinent to mention here that Guru Nanak was well acquainted with Islamic teachings and Sufi doctrines. He had travelled extensively and visited many holy places. Moreover he had met and conversed with many Sufis of his time particularly Sheikh Sharaf of Panipat and Sheikh Ibrahim, the spiritual successor of Baba Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar. Therefore, his teachings are very close to the mystical doctrines preached by the Muslim Sufis.

Before quoting fellow Sikh, Tara Chand, who declared:

How deep Guru Nanak’s debt is to Islam, it is hardly necessary to state, for it is so evident in his words and thoughts. Manifestly **he was STEEPED in Sufi lore** and the fact of the matter is that it is much harder to find how much exactly he drew from the Hindu scriptures. [\[111\]](#) (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

Western academics have also identified said syncretic relations. According to Prof Paul Courtright, “the origins of Guru Nanak’s thought and religious approach are a part of the Bhakti renaissance which swept Hindu India from the ninth to seventeenth centuries”. In this context, while he identifies, “in the broad sense, Sikhism ... [to be] a syncretistic religion, because it stands geographically and historically in the running together of the rivers of Hinduism and Islam”, he nonetheless “dispel[s] the simplistic notion that Sikhism is a conscious syncretism or that it is primarily an attempt to reconcile Hinduism and Islam”.

In answering “the question of how and where Islam feeds into the development of Guru Nanak’s thought and the Sikhism of the Guru”, he turns to McLeod who “argues that Guru Nanak’s religion and that of Sikhism as a whole ‘is firmly embedded in the Sant tradition of Northern India in the beliefs of the so-called *Nirguna Sampradaya*’.” [\[112\]](#) Whether McLeod’s contention that Nanak and the Bhaktas, whose writings were included in the SGGS, were part of the *Sant* tradition or not is not relevant to our discussion. [\[113\]](#) What is of importance, however, is McLeod’s opinion that not only were “certain Muslim influences

... mediated through the Sants”, but any “syncretism as there was with Islam, specifically Punjabi Sufism, had already gone on before Guru Nanak’s appearance”. As such:

Guru Nanak is the recipient of an already syncretistic tradition in which **Muslim influence had already become so interwoven into the fabric of Hindu Bhakta that it was IMPOSSIBLE to identity it any longer as Muslim**. This means that any Muslim influence that may be found will already have been channelled through mixed sources. (bold, underline capitalisation ours)

The highlighted text is significant in accurately answering the underlying question that naturally arises when faced with any claim of Nanak’s alleged Muslim identity. Courtright adds:

McLeod argues that as Guru Nanak rejected the conventionalism of Islam it would not be fruitful to search for Muslim influences there, but rather in Sufism and specifically in **Punjabi Sufism** which itself **had undergone some Hinduization in the preceding centuries**. (bold ours)

Here again a distinction has been made by McLeod between conventional Islam, i.e. orthodoxy, and the Sufism that dominated in the region of Punjab. Courtright continues:

Guru Nanak probably met and talked with Punjabi Sufis. The argument for direct influence from Punjabi Sufism is harder to document in Guru Nanak’s thought than the argument of influence mediated through the Sant tradition. McLeod maintains that the two Sufi writings included in the *Guru Granth* already demonstrate the stamp of Sant influence and most likely they may have been in their possession before they were passed on to Guru Arjun for inclusion in the *Guru Granth*. So, then, even **what appears to be clearly syncretism in the inclusion of Muslim writings in the *Guru Granth* is a case of Punjabi Islamic mysticism ALREADY BAPTIZED into Hindu mysticism before it was passed along through Gum Nanak into the Sikh tradition**. [114] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

However, to “push this question farther and ask about the apparent similarities between Sufism and Guru Nanak”, Courtright suggests that according to McLeod, Sufi terminology for the ideas of “oneness of God, revelation in creation, God’s transcendence yet immanence, and the rejection of needless asceticism [which] can all be found both in Sufism and Guru Nanak”, and which “persuaded some scholars to think that Guru Nanak got these ideas from the Sufis... is conspicuously absent in Guru Nanak. **Whenever a Sufi concept seems to be obvious in Guru Nanak, the language expressing the concept is not Sufi**” (bold ours). McLeod is, thus, quoted as saying:

In contrast to this relative absence of Sufi terms we find a wealth of Sant terminology and imagery derived from Hindu sources. Almost all of his basic terminology is of native Indian derivation.

As a result: “Since we have already rejected Guru Nanak’s closer ties with Islamic tradition, it is a more convincing argument to see even the Sufi influences themselves mediated back through Bhakti sources into Guru Nanak’s thought.” [115]

Rizvi elaborates more specifically on the interconnected beliefs of the two groups stating:

He [Nanak] urges that the effort to seek Him in places of worship and centres of pilgrimage is futile. He is hidden 'within' the searcher and only a true Guru directs him to the right path. ... In the same strain the Sufis ask their disciples to seek Him in their own hearts, for the heart is the seat of the Divine grace. [\[116\]](#)

Furthermore, resemblance between Nanak's pursuit of the divine and the Sufis' has again been acknowledged by Sikh scholars. In spite of McLeod's reservations, Prof Surinder Singh Kohli, for example, provides a detailed comparison of not just key concepts, but also synonymous terminological titles for each one:

For unity with the Lord, the Sufi has to pass through several stages. The first is called *nasut* (humanity) or *shariah* (to live according to the law). The second stage is *malakut* (the nature of angels) which pertains to the path of purity (*tariqah*). The third is *jabrut* (the possession of power pertaining to knowledge (*marifah*)). Then there is *fana* (absorption into the deity) pertaining to Truth (*haqiqah*). These stages have a close affinity with the stages mentioned by Guru Nanak in *Japji*. *Nasut* and *Dharam Khand* (the region of piety) are the same. *Malakut* resembles *Saram Khand* (the region of effort) and *Gyan Khand* (the region of knowledge) may be added to it. *Jabrut*, or the possession of power, seems identical with *Karam Khand* (the region of Grace) and *Fana*, or Truth, with *Sach Khand* (the region of Truth). There are, of course, several points of difference regarding these stages, but, at surface, there appears to be a great similarity. [\[117\]](#)

We find a good deal of similarity, however, in the concept of spiritual ascent as propounded by the Sufis and Guru Nanak. Both commend the common path of love and devotion. Both have the *Shariat* (The Law) as their base. It has been called *Dharam Khand* (The region of *Dharma*) by Guru Nanak. In Arabic, this state is called *Nasut* or humanity, which is the natural state of every human being. This state is the beginning of the journey of the seeker and is known as "Safaru'l-abd". Through the practice of *Shariat* or *Dharma*, the seeker acquires the nature of angels or *Malakut* where upon he takes the path of spiritual journey, called *Tariqat*. Guru Nanak has mentioned two regions in this state of *Malakut* i.e. the region of knowledge (*Gyan Khand*) and the region of effort (*Saram Khand*). Through the knowledge gained from the preceptor and through continuous effort, the seeker purifies his mind and intellect and attains the status of a *Siddha*. Guru Nanak categorically asserts that the creation of Infinite Lord cannot be delimited. In this Cosmos, pervaded by Almighty, the seeker attunes himself with Infinite, who is All-Powerful and absorbs Power, the possession of which is called *Jabarut*, for which *Marifat* (Gnosis) is the means. Guru Nanak has called this state the region of Grace (*Karam Khand*), where the seeker lives in bliss and fullness of God. Ultimately the Truth merges with THE TRUTH. Guru Nanak has called this state as the region of Truth (*Sach Khand*) which in Arabic is called *Lahut* (Divinity), a state of absorption in the All-Conscious, All-Bliss and All-Seeing Lord. In this state, the seeker attains Reality, which is called *Haqiqat* in Sufi terminology. [\[118\]](#)

It is interesting to note that these two stages, viz. *Nasut* and *Lahut*, are an integral part of the Hallajiya (named after the Persian heretic, Mansur al-Hallaj) Sufi order's mystical search for the divine. As Nizami reveals:

The doctrines of the Hallajiya order may be thus summarised:

1. in *Fiqh*, the five *fara'id*, even the Hajj may be replaced by other works (*isqat-a 'l-wasa'it*).

2. in *Kalam*, God's transcendence (*tanzih*) above the limits of creation (*tul, ard*), the existence of an uncreated Divine spirit (*Ruh-i-Natiqah*), which becomes united with the created *Ruh* (spirit) of the ascetic (*hulul-a 'l-lahut-fi 'l-nasut*); the saint becomes the living and personal witness of God, whence the saying: *An 'l-Haqq* "I am creative Truth".
3. in *Tasawwuf*, perfect union with the divine will through desire of and submission to suffering. [\[119\]](#) (bold ours)

As for the similarities between Nanak's conception of God and the Sufi-Sants', then Rizvi highlights:

Although Guru Nanak's God is both immanent and transcendent, his complete rejection of duality takes him **nearer to those Sufis whose approach was devotional rather than speculative**. He offers his devotion to the Supreme Being alone, not to one of His incarnations. **Thus he is at once a Sufi and a muwahhid sant.** [\[120\]](#) (bold ours)

But while Rizvi overlooks the peculiar beliefs of these so-called *muwahhids vis-à-vis* God, Prof Amritlal Shah better identifies these by stating that "almost all the Sufis have emphasised the essential unity of the universe and thereby questioned one of the most fundamental beliefs of Islam regarding the transcendent nature of God". [\[121\]](#) What makes this point of vital importance is that orthodox Islam never expressed God's essential nature as being both "immanent and transcendent", but wholly transcendent.

Yet, despite the many strands of doctrines shared by both the Sufis and the saints, there remains the question of how to reconcile between claims of Sufism's influence over Nanak and beliefs attributed to him that were unquestionably unIslamic. In fact, it is precisely this doubt that Courtwright presents as "[a]nother reason for arguing against direct Sufi influence i[n] that some of Guru Nanak's key concepts are in conflict with Sufism". In this case:

The doctrines of karma and transmigration of soul are the most notable examples. (bold ours)

Similarly, Anil Chandra Banerjee succinctly declares that "Nanak's acceptance of the doctrines of Karma and transmigration separated him from the Sufis". [\[122\]](#)

And while Rizvi too raises this issue, he proposes a somewhat vague reconciliation by suggesting:

He [Nanak] believed in transmigration and his ideas on the subject are not incompatible with the ideas of the Sufis of the unorthodox school in many places resembling Rumi's description of the spiritual ascent of man. [\[123\]](#) (bold ours)

The crucial point to grasp here is that Rizvi draws a clear line between those who affirm the doctrine of transmigration, which include the Sufis of this unknown "unorthodox school", and those who do not – presumably the Sufis of the orthodox school. However, Rizvi's attempt at associating transmigration to Rumi's description of the spiritual ascent of man is a highly contested issue and far from settled. As a matter of fact, not only does Hanif disagree with such an assessment in his extensive *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis [in] South Asia*, but only recognises a handful of Sufis in the region. [\[124\]](#)

Nevertheless, perhaps it is this obvious divide between the two belief systems that forces Rizvi to paradoxically assert that his “analysis of Guru Nanak’s teachings in the light of Sufi thought should not be construed as an assertion that the great Guru borrowed his thought from the Sufis. It indicates that Guru Nanak, through his own deep meditation, arrived at the same conclusions as had already been reached by Sufis, such as Rumi, Sa’di, ‘Iraqi, Jami and Hafiz”. [\[125\]](#) Yet, such an explanation seems to negate any possibility of social context having influenced Nanak’s conclusions, a factor Rizvi certainly seems to acknowledge elsewhere:

In his [Nanak’s] early life, he was inquisitive beyond his age, was given to profound meditation and was exceedingly humane. His critical acumen and balanced judgement helped him to carve out an outstanding place for himself in an environment overflowing with mystical thought and spiritual attainments. As he belonged to a literate family, neatly placed in the service of the Afghan governors of the Punjab, he must have listened to verses of Rumi, Sa’di, Hafiz and Jami in his own home environment and the thought of the great mystic poets would have aroused his interest in Divine love, grace and mercy. As his understanding of the Supreme Being matured and his experience increased, he felt himself endowed with a sort of Divine inspiration which made his thought pattern unique and gave him a serene self-confidence. [\[126\]](#)

It is too simplistic an explanation to restrict Nanak’s conclusions to mere meditation alone when he was known to have frequently interacted with and been exposed to a variety of sources and materials that would have invariably had a profound impact in shaping his final thoughts and experiences.

It is, therefore, entirely understandable why McLeod rejected any unqualified assertion of a direct influence of Sufism over Nanak including something as simple as “the argument Toynbee articulates that Guru Nanak got his monotheism from Islam”. Courtright posits instead: “Had Guru Nanak drawn his monotheism from Sufism we would expect to find Sufi terminology. The fact is that we do not find such terminology.” He, thus, concludes:

To summarize this investigation of Islamic influences, we have maintained that some influence from Punjabi Sufism can be detected in Guru Nanak’s thought. **This influence had already been absorbed into the Bhakti Sant tradition.** Whatever direct influence there was from Sufism is minimal. As McLeod states, “... no fundamental components of Nanak’s thought can be traced with assurance to an Islamic source. Guru Nanak’s principal inheritance from the religious background of the period was unquestionably that of the Sant tradition and evidence of other independent influences is relatively slight. We must acknowledge that the antecedents of the Sant beliefs are by no means wholly clear and that within the area of obscurity there may be important features which derived primarily from Sufi sources.” We are drawn to the conclusion that one cannot justify the statement that Guru Nanak drew his idea of monotheism or any other central belief, language or imagery directly from Islamic sources. The process of syncretism between Hinduism and Islam had already been going on for some time before Guru Nanak. **He was an heir to this process and emerges out of a tradition which had already confronted and assimilated some Islamic influence.** Consequently, Guru Nanak himself is not the syncretizing element in the development of Sikhism but comes out of an age when exchange and interpenetration had been going on for at least three centuries before him. [\[127\]](#) (bold ours)

Hence, it was not Sufism that had a direct influence on Nanak, but rather Bhaktism whose religious doctrines are at such odds with orthodox Islam as compared to Sufism that one hopes even the Ahmadiyya would not be so foolish as to suggest the Bhaktis were Muslims.

He [Nanak] believed in transmigration and his ideas on the subject are not incompatible with the ideas of the Sufis of the unorthodox school in many places resembling Rumi's description of the spiritual ascent of man.

When critically evaluating the evidence before us then, it should be obvious to any fair and critically minded individual that if Nanak was in anyway remotely associated to Islam, it certainly could not have been orthodox. Hence, all unqualified assertions of Islam's influence on this so-called Guru cannot and should not be given any consideration.

Of course, the irony is that while the Ahmadiyya went to extremes in brazenly rejecting the prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), they also went to the opposite extreme by insisting that Nanak was a bona fide Muslim, albeit a Sufi.

In all then, if one is to insist that Nanak was a Sufi or was directly influenced by Sufism, which as we have shown is a very big 'if', then in light of the heretical beliefs of the Sufis of his time and especially his locale, Nanak would have to be classified as an extreme Sufi who affirmed beliefs and doctrines entirely alien to the original message preached by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). As to whether such a person could strictly be classed a Muslim would stretch the boundaries of acceptability to the limit.

Although this may seem to be a tentative conclusion to some, this is only because we have yet to evaluate the historical evidence that will help us better understand Nanak's religious beliefs. The strongest arguments forwarded in support of Nanak's Muslim identity rests on historical grounds – arguments conceived by Ghulam Ahmad that have managed to fool his gullible flock to this day.

As we highlighted above, Ahmad's Nanakian proposition rests on two grounds:

1. Relics attributed to Nanak.
2. The Sikh historical tradition.

It is these evidences we will now deconstruct and critically examine in detail.

EXHIBIT A – THE RELICS OF GURU NANAK

The strength of this first argument rests entirely on the premise that the relics attributed to Nanak were indeed his. But how valid is this assumption and on what evidential basis does this rest?

The two relics in question are: 1) a *chola*, or cloak, often referred to as the *Chola Sahib*; 2) a Qur'an said to be a personal copy of his. Notwithstanding the fact that the former is given far more prominence and importance than the latter, the approach in analysing the purported facts and supportive arguments is effectively the same for both. We can begin by asking the simple question: what good reasons are there for accepting such assertions?

No doubt, the first person we turn to in answering this is Ghulam Ahmad who, in reply to a one Sardar Raj Indar Singh, revealed:

I have seen Baba Nanak Sahib twice in my visions. He acknowledged that he had obtained light from the same source. Vain talk and falsehood are the characteristics of those who swallow carrion; I have stated only that which I have seen. That is why I hold Baba Nanak Sahib in high esteem, as I know that he drank from the same spring from which we drink. God Almighty knows that I speak out of the comprehension which has been bestowed upon me. [\[128\]](#)

In staking his claim upon divine revelation, Ahmad essentially put all his eggs into one basket. As the Qadiani, Maulana Muhammad Ali, candidly puts it, since “the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement had already come to the conclusion that Guru Nanak was in fact a true Muslim, he also thought of solving the mystery enshrouding the *chola*“. [\[129\]](#) This “most convincing piece of evidence which the Promised Messiah discovered and recorded in his book is the *Chola Sahib*“, explains Ali’s coreligionist Syed Hasanat Ahmad, “is a cotton cloak and held very sacred by the Sikhs. So, the Promised Messiah sent a deputation to the custodian of the *Chola Sahib* in Dera Baba Nanak, the deputation reported that they had seen written on the *Chola* verses from the Holy Quran”. [\[130\]](#)

This approach at magnifying the historical worth of the cloak amongst the Sikhs is one that is repeated *ad nauseam* by the Ahmadiyya. In their periodical, *Review of Religions*, for instance, the author uses this broadbrush to say that “the *chola* has been honored and respected and often worshipped by the followers of Nanak continually during the four hundred years which have elapsed since it came into existence. Annual fairs and gatherings have also been always held in connection with it, and the coverings that have been offered from time to time by Rajas and Raises are a standing testimony to the honor in which the *chola* has always been held by people of all classes among the followers of Nanak”. Whether the Sikhs collectively held the *chola* in such high regard or whether its importance and status was more restricted is difficult to gauge. Nevertheless, what can be asserted with confidence is how the Ahmadiyya have glorified its status to support their stance. As they boast:

Although there are numerous other evidences showing clearly that Nanak was really a Muhammadan and we shall produce some of them in the subsequent issues of the Magazine, yet the evidence afforded by the *chola* sahib is of such a sound and irrefutable character that it alone decides the question of Nanak’s religion. [\[131\]](#)

In any case, it ought to be obvious that the historical import of this relic cannot be measured by the degree of importance given to it by a community, and yet this is precisely what the Ahmadiyya have done. Rather than objectively determining the truth of the historical tradition surrounding the *chola*, they have conveniently accepted it *a priori* before opportunistically presenting it as fact to serve their agenda. In addition, Howard Arnold Walter noted while making extensive recourse to said periodical:

According to Ahmad, this *chola* was said to have had a miraculous divine origin, and tradition declared also that verses from the sacred scriptures of all religions had been written upon it by the hand of God.

Several hundred coverings, placed over the *chola* by successive generations of Sikhs, obscured the writings: but by special arrangement, on the 30th of September, 1895, the

coverings were removed to allow Ahmad, who had undertaken a pilgrimage for the purpose, to view the sacred relic. Ahmad then discovered that “From top to bottom the verses of the Holy Qur’an, especially those refuting the false doctrines of other faiths with regard to Divine Unity and attributes, were written upon it” (Review of Religions, II, p. 32). [\[132\]](#)

And we are told that obviously “Nanak wore the chola that no one might be deceived as to the religion he professed. ... How could he be best known as a Muhammadan except by wearing a cloak which could not be worn by any but the truest Muhammadan?” (Review of Religions, II, p. 33). ...

“[T]he false notion of the Sikhs that Nanak professed any religion other than Islam has been brought to naught by the discovery of the sacred *chola*. Through centuries of Sikh warfare, the chola was preserved to serve as a testimony of the truth of Islam at the appointed time when the sun of its truth was to shine forth in its full effulgence the chola was miraculously preserved so that it may both fulfil the prophetic word in relation to the appearance of the Promised Messiah to accomplish the object of making Islam the predominant religion by strong arguments and heavenly signs, and be a testimony to the truth of Islam by showing that it was from this source that the founder of a great religion received all his blessings” (Review of Religions, II, p. 35-36).

I am informed by my friend, Sardar Tara Singh, of the staff of the Khalsa (Sikh) High School, in Lahore, that there is supposed to be a chola of Guru Nanak at Dera Baba Nanak, and that there are Arabic characters upon it which no one has been able to decipher. [\[133\]](#) (bold ours)

No one, of course, save Ghulam Ahmad!

Hasanat Ahmad confirms that the “custodians of the *Chola* did not know what was written on it. The custodians found it unusual that one should be so interested to see the *Chola* in original [*sic*]. The keeper, who was paid fourteen rupees by the people who accompanied the Promised Messiah, allowed the writings on the *Chola* to be copied out. It openly declared that ‘Islam was the only true religion and Muhammad was the Messenger of God.’” [\[134\]](#)

Maulana Ali expands:

Accordingly, on 30th September 1895, he started, with some of his friends, for Dera Nanak. By special arrangements made with the guardian of the *chola*, the numerous coverings, mostly of silk or fine cloth, were taken off one by one, and the actual writing on the *chola* was revealed. This was nothing but verses of the Holy Quran, and they were at once copied. This wonderful disclosure of the writing on the *chola* showed clearly that Nanak was a Muslim at heart. The result of the investigation was published in a book, called *Sat Bachan*; and though the orthodox Sikhs were greatly aroused when it appeared, yet the truth of its statements concerning the *chola* has never been questioned. [\[135\]](#)

If it is, indeed, the case that “the truth of its statements concerning the *chola* has never been questioned”, then it gives us pleasure to be the first.

To continue, an account in the *Review of Religions* elaborates further still:

There was not a single verse of the Vedas or any other religious book upon it except the Holy Quran. From top to bottom the verses of the Holy Quran, especially those refuting the false

doctrines of other faiths with regard to Divine Unity and attributes, were written upon it. The part revealed first of all contained the most well-known verse used in the beginning of the chapters of the Holy Quran ... In the name of God, the most merciful, the most compassionate. Then followed the reputed formula of Muhammadan faith ... Nothing deserves to be worshipped besides God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God. ... Verse after verse of the Holy Quran was then revealed. ... Verily the true religion with God is the faith of Islam. ... I bear witness that there is no god besides God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Prophet. ... Say, God is one. Everything owes its existence to God but God owes His existence to none, neither does He beget nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him. ... Verily those who enter into thy *bai'at*, O Prophet, enter into the *bai'at* of God. Besides these, there was the well-known verse known as the throne-verse, as well as the chapter entitled "Help," the chapter entitled *Fatiha*, the names of the Divine Being mentioned in the Holy Quran and several other verses of the Quran, in all of which importance is attached to adherence to the principles of Islam. [\[136\]](#)

At this point, a few observations need to be made. The first is that despite tradition recording "that verses from the sacred scriptures of **all religions** had been written upon it [the chola] by the hand of God" (bold ours), the Ahmadiyya have reported that **only** verses of the Qur'an were found "refuting the false doctrines of other faiths with regard to Divine Unity and attributes". The second is the origin of the cloak which the Ahmadiyya accept as having been presented to Nanak by none other than God Himself. Ahmad relates a tradition in which Nanak is given this robe during his trek with sidekick Mardana through Arabia:

A voice then came to Nanak from heaven, saying: "Nanak, I am well pleased with thee and grant thee a dress." Nanak said: "As it please Thee, O Lord, for Thou art alone and without any partner or rival." Then Nanak prostrated himself and thanked God. A cloak (the chola) was then granted him and upon it were written the words of nature in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. ... After seven days there was a general talk among the people that there was a dervish upon whose cloak were written the thirty sections of the Divine Quran. ... Nanak told him to take off the cloak if it was in his power. The people then ran to him but they could not take off the cloak as it was the gift of God and had been woven by the hands of nature. [\[137\]](#)

Ahmad references this to "a tradition related in the Sakhi of Bhai Bala, more commonly known as Angad's Sakhi", [\[138\]](#) or as Maulana Ali repeats more fully:

A tradition in the *Sakhi* of Bhai Bala, more commonly known as Angad's *Sakhi*, states that the *chola* was sent down to Nanak from heaven and that upon it were written the words of nature in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. [\[139\]](#)

While the *Review of Religions* attempts to rationalise the supernatural nature of the story as follows:

Excluding some details, the tradition seems in the main to be creditable. The mere fact that it relates the *chola* as having come down from heaven and the words written upon it as having been written by the hand of God, does not throw any discredit upon its truthfulness. The powers of God should not be limited to the small compass of human understanding. Moreover the words of the tradition allow of another easy interpretation. The words written upon the chola may have been revealed to Nanak by God, and in that case they would be spoken of as having come down from heaven, since the Word of God which is revealed to

man, really descends from heaven. Such metaphors are common in spiritual language, and that which is revealed by God is regarded as the Work of God Himself. ... The *chola* was given to him from heaven as a sign that in the injunctions written upon it was the pleasure of God, and in its directions was the guidance to true salvation. Nanak, therefore, wore the *chola* because it was a sign from heaven of the pleasure of God. [\[140\]](#)

Incidentally, this supernatural origin is not accepted by everyone. H.S. Singha, for example, relates that it was “presented to Guru Nanak by a Muslim devotee of Baghdad”. [\[141\]](#) This view is also held by Gurbachan Singh Sidhu who, in his published discourse with a Qadiani, argues:

Such offerings were given not only to Guru Nanak alone but also to the later Gurus who accepted them gratefully.

An awning and a *Chauri* offered by a Muslim can still be seen in the golden Temple at Amritsar. [\[142\]](#) Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru caused a mosque to be built in Hargobind Pur for his Muslim followers at his own expense. **Guru Arjan Dev was a great friend of Saaeen Mian Meer and they frequently stayed and prayed together.** The Guru offered his composition “Sukhmani” to the Meer who later sent it to Ajmer Sharif. The Guru was sent a turban and Rs500 by the Sajada Nasheen of Ajmer as a token of respect. Examples can be given ad infinitum where gifts were exchanged between the Sikh Gurus and the Muslim divines. The most striking example is that of Peer Budhu Shah of Sadhaura (still worshipped by the Muslims in India) who sacrificed his sons for Guru Gobind Singh. When asked to claim recompense, the Peer simply asked for the Guru’s hair and comb. These relics are still with the Peer’s family in Pakistan. Last year a descendant of the peer brought these to England and they were openly displayed in Sikh temples. The utensil given by Guru Gobind Singh to Rai Kalah of Raikot is yet another example. ... **If the Guru’s comb, Sukhmani, and hair did not turn Muslims into Sikhs and the Awning, Chauri and the Sajada Nasheen’s turban did not turn the Gurus into Muslims, how can you claim that Guru Nanak became a Muslim just by accepting a gift from a Muslim friend?** [\[143\]](#) (bold, underline ours)

In other words, it is premature to conclude that Nanak’s utilisation, or anyone else’s for that matter, of a religiously-oriented gift serves as indisputable evidence of his religious identity.

Notwithstanding such a discrepancy, the same source is also relied upon in determining what became of the attire after Nanak’s death and how it came into the hands of the custodians. Maulana Ali relates:

Upon Nanak’s death, the *chola* passed to his first successor, Angad, and thus to successive Gurus, till the time of the fifth Guru, Arjan Das. In his time, the *chola* was obtained by Tota Ram, in recognition of some great service done. After some time, it fell into the hands of Kabli Mal, a descendant of Nanak, and, since then, it has remained in the hands of his descendants at Dera Nanak. On account of the high repute and sanctity in which the *chola* was held by the followers of Nanak, the practice became common at an early date of offering coverings to protect it from wear and tear. The mystery which surrounded the *chola* became deeper by the increased number of coverings, which hid it altogether from the eye of the worshipper. Only a part of the sleeve was shown, but, by constant handling, the letters on that part became quite obscure. [\[144\]](#)

Ghulam Ahmad added:

It is stated in the Sakhi of the *chola* that upon Nanak's death, the sacred *chola* passed to his first successor Angad This ceremony was duly gone through by every succeeding Guru until the time of the fifth Guru, Arjan Das. At the time of succession they wore it on their heads and on great occasions sought blessing from it. Now in the days of Arjan Das, a tank was being dug at Amritsar and many zealous Sikhs were engaged in the task. One of them, named Tota Ram, worked so hard and with such zeal that being extremely pleased with him, Arjan Das expressed his readiness to grant him anything that he liked. Upon this Tota Ram begged of him the *Sukhi Dan*, i.e., the gift which should give him eternal happiness or the thing by which he should be guided in his religion. Arjan Das knew at once that he was asking for the *chola*, for in the *chola* only was the guidance to the true religion, and said: "Thou hast asked of me my whole property." He then made over the *chola* to Tota Ram. After some time it fell into the hands of Kabli Mal, a descendant of Nanak, and since then it has remained in the hands of his descendants at Dera Nanak in the Gurdaspur district. [145]

Once again, the Ahmadiyya accept Sikh tradition *a priori* when highlighting the purpose of the cloak by insisting that it was donned by Nanak to help identify him as a Muslim. The *Review of Religions* maintains:

Nanak wore the *chola* that **no one might be deceived as to the religion he professed**. The evidence of the unity of God and of the Divine mission of the Holy Prophet, **was not only uttered by his lips** but was expressed on his very clothes. How could he be best known as a Muhammadan except by wearing a cloak which could not be worn by any but the truest Muhammadan? Wherever he passed he might have been easily known to all as a Muhammadan The asserted origin of the *chola* also corroborates the conclusion that Nanak wore the *chola* as an apparent sign of his being a Muslim. Being a Hindoo by birth, he could not for a moment wear the *chola* unless he believed in its Divine origin and had renounced the faith condemned by the words of the *chola*. The words expressive of his own former state were also there ... "Holy art thou, O God, there is no god besides thee, I was one of the unjust," thus clearly indicating that from the time that he wore the *chola*, he no more professed his former religion. **The *chola*, moreover, affords the only uninterrupted and, therefore, the only sure, testimony of Nanak's religious principles. In short, there are strong and valid arguments showing that the *chola* which is now kept at Dera Nanak is the very *chola* which Nanak wore as a sign of his Islam. Firstly, it is mentioned in the Janam Sakhi of Angad and Bala which is one of the earliest writings of the Sikh religion. Secondly, there is a book in the hands of the descendants of Kabli Mal, the guardians of the *chola*, known as the *chola* Sakhi, and in it, it is clearly stated that the *chola* was the gift of God to Nanak, and that his successors all sought blessing from it and honored it. This is a clear proof that the *chola* has ever been regarded as the spiritual gift of Nanak to his successors and as a source of blessings.** [146] (bold ours)

All this, however, raises some considerable problems that require addressing. Consider, for example, why anyone would have been "deceived as to the religion he professed" if "[t]he evidence of the unity of God and of the Divine mission of the Holy Prophet was ... uttered by his lips"? This question becomes all the more acute when taking into consideration Ahmad's insistence that Nanak "was actually a Muslim [who] performed Hajj, married into a Muslim family, and lived a pious life". [147] If all this were true, then there should never have been any inkling towards his Muslim identity; certainly not to the extent reported. But the fact that there was suggests that there must have existed sufficient doubt that forced him into wearing

such elaborate attire with said purpose. If we assume, arguendo, that Nanak was considered by some to be nominally Muslim, then it is more than likely, as we have argued, that this highly remote connection probably stemmed from his association to the Bhakti movement.

Such nuances of interpretation are, of course, wholly ignored by the Ahmadiyya who opt for an approach that not only gives greater concern towards achieving their agenda than with historical accuracy, but also better explains some of the tendentiously simplistic conclusions expressed by their academics. For example, Abdul Jaleel contends:

The Chola, or the cloak of Baba Nanak, is the holiest relic of the Guru and is preserved in Dera Baba Nanak, a small village in Gurdaspur District of the Punjab. This is a cloak which Nanak wore in his life-time and it is considered so sacred that his immediate followers took every care to keep it safe. The regard and reverence rendered to the Chola by the Sikh community is a testimony to the authenticity of the cloak. [\[148\]](#)

There is then the important issue of whether the cloak's history extends uninterrupted from the current custodians all the way back to the person of Nanak. There appears to be a tradition which, if uncritically accepted, as the Ahmadiyya have done to suit their agenda, suggests that this robe was at one point in time unaccounted for before its apparent rediscovery by a one Baba Kabli Mal. The story goes that Guru Arjan awarded the robe passed down to him via the four Gurus to Bhai Tota Ram, a resident of the town of Balakh-Bokhara in northern Afghanistan, who "before his death, [] anticipated that his children might not look after the Holy Robe (Chola Sahib) properly. So he put it in a cave and closed the opening with a Big Rock". Much later, it came into the hands of Baba Kabli Mal as follows:

Baba Shri Chand was not married and Baba Lakhmi Dass Ji was married. **Baba Kabli Mal Ji belonged to the eight generation of Baba Lakhmi Dass Ji and thus direct descendent of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.** Baba Kabli Mal Ji used to meditate a lot and was leading a saintly life. The incidence is more than 270 years old when Baba Kabli Mal Ji dreamt about Guru Nanak Dev Ji who told him about his Holy Robe (Chola Sahib) lying at Balkh-Bokhara (Afganistan) and asked him to bring it from there. When Baba Kabli Mal Ji reached there accordingly, the people of that area confirmed that Guru Ji's Holy Robe was lying inside the cave which is blocked by a big Rock.

Baba Kabli Mal Ji kept thinking about how to remove the huge rock. At night again he dreamt about Guru Ji. Guru Ji told Baba Kabli Mal Ji not to worry, Get up early morning, Take bath and Prepare "Prashad" (offering) Recite Japuji Sahib and Sprinkle water five times on the Rock. Baba Ji did as was ordained and the 'rock' was shifted aside. Taking the Holy Robe (Chola Sahib) Baba Kabli Mal Ji reached Dera Baba Nanak on 21st Phalgun (4th March). The Holy Robe (Chola Sahib) is now being very properly looked after by Baba Sukhdev Singh Ji Bedi a direct descendent of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. [\[149\]](#) (bold ours)

The Sikh Encyclopedia is more specific regarding the date of its rediscovery:

GURDWARA LANGAR MANDIR CHOLA SAHIB, in the eastern part of the town, is connected with a relic a chola, or cloak, believed to have been presented to Guru Nanak by a Muslim devotee at Baghdad. The chola, bearing some Qura'nic verses and Arabic numerals, arranged in the form of charms embroidered on it, was procured from Baghdad by Baba Kabali Mall, a descendant of Guru Nanak, it is said. It was brought to Dera Baba Nanak on 20 Phagun 1884 Bk / 1 March 1828. [\[150\]](#)

This account essentially casts doubt over the Ahmadiyya's assertion that "the *chola* has been honored and respected and often worshipped by the followers of Nanak **continually during the four hundred years** which have elapsed since it came into existence". [\[151\]](#) Instead, what can be derived is that although a death date of Tota Ram is unknown, it can safely be estimated that since he was a contemporary of Arjan, who died in 1606 CE, this chola would have been unaccounted for for at least two centuries. In light of this, what credible evidence is there to corroborate both this fantastical tale and, most importantly, the authenticity of this chola?

In the end, the entire argument surrounding the cloak's historical association to Nanak can be said to rest on two grounds: 1) The reputation afforded the chola by the Sikh community, *viz.* the Dera Baba Nanak custodians; 2) and the historical traditions of Sikhism. The only evidence the Ahmadiyya have in lending any credibility to the former is via the latter. Other than this, nothing else is offered that might objectively support their case. Hence, what is required is to determine the historical veracity of the sources relied upon by Ghulam Ahmad and his ilk.

EXHIBIT B – THE BALA JANAMSAKHI

A defining characteristic of the Ahmadiyya is their selective sourcing of historical materials to achieve their end goals. And though they are as guilty of cherry picking from the sources of Sikhism as they have been with Islam's, we will demonstrate below that this approach is wholly self-defeating which only serves to further expose their founder's lies and hypocrisy.

Take, for instance, the following standards of verificationism adhered to by Ahmad himself:

It is indeed a great pity to disregard such an important testament of such a holy person, for *Chola Sahib* is the only personal relic of Baba Sahib left with the Khalsas. As for **the verses of *Granth Sahib*, they were collected much later, and researchers have quite a few reservations about them.** God alone knows how many interpolations have crept therein and how many people have contributed to this collection. Anyhow, this is not what we are discussing, for our aim is to point out that, for the purpose of keeping the faith of mankind ever fresh, there is always the need for fresh revelation. [\[152\]](#)

Notice how unquestioning he was towards any doubts expressed against the authenticity of the Sikh scripture, including the presence of interpolations, presumably because it supported his overall contention. As a matter of fact, so certain was he of its reliability that he considered this tradition to be *more* authentic than the four Biblical Gospels:

Look at the episode of Baba Nanak Sahib. One million and seven hundred thousand Sikhs unanimously believe that he went bodily to heaven after he died. This belief is not only unanimous but is **recorded in authentic books, which date back to the time of the occurrence.** ... [T]he arguments of the Sikh gentlemen about the disappearance of Baba Nanak Sahib's body and his going to heaven with his physical frame are more cogent and worthy of attention than their [Christian's] own gilded lies, and are, without doubt, stronger than the so-called arguments of the Gospels, for they were **simultaneously recorded in Bala's *Janam Sakhi*, whereas the Gospels were chronicled many years after the time of Jesus.** [\[153\]](#) (bold ours)

Ahmad deduced that the arguments derived from a contemporary source would be far more compelling than those recorded much later after the fact. Hence, the *Bala JS*, which he understood to be recorded circa Nanak's lifetime, was for him virtually indisputable *vis-à-vis* its authenticity. Such an assumption is understandable given that evidence falsifying it being a contemporary Nanakian source were yet to be adduced. However, are such considerations applicable or even appropriate for a true Prophet of God? To put it another way, would God stand by and allow a mistake of such magnitude, which would threaten to disprove the claims of Prophethood, to occur by one of His emissaries without intervening to protect his status and honour?

A tactic commonly employed by the Ahmadiyya to dismiss the many anti-Islamic concepts attributed to Nanak in the Sikh scripture is to undermine its authenticity by arguing that it was compiled and standardised well after his death. This ad hoc approach is mentioned by the Qadiani Muhammad Barkatullah below:

[I]t is generally accepted that **the Holy Book of the Sikhs, Granth Saheb, was actually compiled about TWO HUNDRED YEARS after Baba Nanak**. Hazrat Ahmad, nevertheless, contended that there could be no contradictions in Baba Nanak's words. **Evidently at a later time some writers interpolated their own ideas into the Granth Saheb**. The Encyclopaedia Britannica contends that the Granth actually contains the composition of many people. It is very easy to separate the real sayings of Baba Nanak from the sayings attributed to him. The yard-stick is the teachings of the Holy Book of the Muslims, the Holy Quran. Baba Nanak's sayings in the Granth Saheb which are an explanation, translation of the verses from the Holy Quran are authentic. Any other contradictory material, contrary to Holy Quran's teachings, is an interpolation of a later date. (Sut Bachan, pp. 134-137). [\[154\]](#) (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

It should be noted that this and similar such arguments all stem from the presupposition that since Ahmad was infallible in matters of the religion, any and all evidence to the contrary would *ipso facto* have to be spurious and, thus, rejected as false.

But, such an approach places the Ahmadiyya between a rock and a hard place. Qadianis like Abdul Jaleel are quick to cast aspersions against the compilers of the Sikh scripture:

The words of Guru Nanak as contained in the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh scriptures) were not collected **until the time of Guru Arjan Dev**, the fifth Guru, and therefore cannot be relied upon as accurate particularly as Sikhism had by that time assumed an attitude of hostility towards Islam. But the Chola is clear from this charge, because it was **handed down by Nanak himself** and has come down to our times in its original condition. ... From the fifth Guru, Arjun Dev, onwards, the Islamic elements started disappearing from Sikh literature including the Granth Sahib with only some of these teachings remaining in some Janam Sakhis written earlier. [\[155\]](#) (bold ours)



The sketch made by the

Ahmadiyya of Nanak's alleged heavenly robe!

They are equally quick to acknowledge the faithful transmission of the chola from Guru to Guru, all of whom, they assert, were involved in the robe being “honored and respected”. They further posit that said robe was “often worshipped by the followers of Nanak continually during the four hundred years which have elapsed since it came into existence”. [156] This is precisely inline with Ahmad’s teachings “that upon Nanak’s death, the sacred *chola* passed to his first successor Angad This ceremony was duly gone through by every succeeding Guru until the time of the fifth Guru, Arjan Das. At the time of succession they wore it on their heads and on great occasions sought blessing from it”. [157] But a robe decidedly covered in the Arabic language, as alleged in sketches made by the Ahmadiyya (see left), opens a Pandora’s Box of questions that simply cannot be ignored. If we take the plausible assumption that the writing inscribed over the entire front was unmistakably recognisable for what it was, then the first and most obvious question is whether this provoked any reaction from the Sikhs, in particular the four Gurus – Angad, Amar Das, Ram Das and Arjan? After all, how could Arabic as ubiquitously well-known as the first pillar of Islam (inscribed on the left sleeve), and which stood to entirely negate Sikhism as a religion: “*Laa ilaaha il-Allah Muhammad ar-Rasullulah* – There is none worthy of worship save Allah and there is none worthy of being followed accept Muhammad the Messenger of Allah” not

elicit a response? It would be completely implausible to entertain the notion that people as well educated as the Gurus would have been oblivious of the damning implications of their founder having proudly donned a robe which taught that Allah alone was worthy of worship only in accordance to Islamic orthopraxy; that Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was the last and final recipient of divine revelation; and that "the only religion acceptable to Allah is Islam" (Qur'an 3:19), as inscribed on the right sleeve.

On the other hand, if any of the four Gurus were privy to this fact, then they would have known of the incriminating consequences of preserving, honouring, and worshipping said cloak, before handing it over to Tota Ram for safe keeping. Let us not forget that these are the very same Gurus the Ahmadiyya have been so quick to accuse of tampering with the text of Nanak's recorded hymns in order to eradicate any evidence of his Muslim identity. Are the Ahmadiyya, therefore, implying that the very same Gurus who insidiously worked to bury such evidence contradictorily preserved it too in the form of this chola? Their entire line of reasoning is so ill-conceived and inconsistent that it fails to hold up to the slightest bit of scrutiny.

The Ahmadiyya are, unsurprisingly, even quicker to accept those traditions they believe to be contemporaneous to Nanak. However, as argued above, the discovery of the much older and more authentic *Puratan JS* forced scholars towards the unanimous conclusion that Bala's *janam sakhi* was, in actual fact, "compiled about two hundred years **AFTER** Baba Nanak" (bold, capitalisation ours), i.e. in the eighteenth century as opposed to the sixteenth. Recall that Barkatullah's assertion that "some writers interpolated their own ideas into the Granth Saheb" "at a later time" is predicated on the assumption that "the holy book of the sikhs, granth saheb, was actually compiled about two hundred years after Baba Nanak". Thus, if such interpolations were possible after such a long period of time, is it not equally possible for spurious and fictitious accounts to have been interpolated in the *Bala JS* – a source not nearly as revered and protected as the SGGS? More importantly, if Ahmad did not consider arguments in the Gospels as "cogent and worthy of attention" as those in the *Bala JS* for not having been "simultaneously recorded" but "chronicled many years after the time of Jesus", then by his own standards he would also have had to concede this *janam sakhi* to be equally groundless and unworthy of attention in the face of new evidence proving it was compiled two centuries after Nanak's death.

Yet, despite all the evidence to the contrary, there are some Qadianis like Abdul Jaleel who have continued to incessantly repeat how this *janam sakhi* "is an authoritative source of Sikhism" and how "Bala was Nanak's constant companion" who "accompanied his Master for twenty years during his travels". [\[158\]](#) As we have seen, scholars consider the former not nearly as authoritative as the Ahmadiyya tend to portray, and have all but rejected the latter. Perhaps it is for this reason that some Qadianis not only cling to outdated evidence, but sadly resort to spin and misrepresentation. One such individual is Ansar Raza who deserves to be scrutinised and exposed for this very reason.

In his article *Baba Guru Nanak – A Muslim Saint*, Raza seeks to prove that "Baba Nanak was a Muslim saint" by extensively citing from Pincott's aforementioned entry included in British missionary Thomas Patrick Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*. But Raza's real reason for referencing said entry, whose authorship he incorrectly attributes to Reverend Hughes, is because his messiah cited the same source a decade after its publication in 1885 for having "clearly state[d] that Guru Baba Nanak was converted to Islam. (Satt Bachan, inside title page, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol-10, p.112)". [\[159\]](#) The only problem is that Pincott said nothing

of the sort. In fact, his conclusions are so conspicuously at odds with those drawn by both Ahmad and Raza that one wonders whether the pair were analytically challenged, or disingenuously opted to misrepresent him.

Take, for instance, how Raza lopsidedly interprets Pincott in the following passage as evidence of his being “confident that ... Baba Nanak was himself a Sufi”:

The Janam-Sakhis, or biographical sketches of Nanak and his associates, contain a profusion of curious traditions which throw considerable light on the origin and development of the Sikh religion. From these old books we learn that, in early life, Nanak, although a Hindu by birth, came under Sufi influence, and was strangely attracted by the saintly demeanour of the faqirs who were thickly scattered over Northern India and swarmed in the Punjab... It is, therefore, only reasonable to suppose that any Hindu affected by Muhammadanism would show some traces of Sufi influence. As a fact, we find that the doctrines preached by the Sikh Gurus were distinctly Sufiistic and, indeed, the early Gurus openly assumed the manners and dress of faqirs, thus plainly announcing their connection with the Sufiistic side of Muhammadanism. In pictures they are represented, with small rosaries in their hands, quite in Muhammadan fashion, as though ready to perform zikr. [160]

Notice that the above says nothing of the sort. According to Pincott, Nanak was attracted towards and came under the influence of Sufism to the point that he “show[ed] some traces of Sufi influence ... thus plainly announcing their connection with the Sufiistic side of Muhammadanism”. It is a fallacious logical leap to infer that a person must be a Sufi for merely showing signs of influence or having connections to them. And though Pincott draws a number of parallels between Nanakian philosophy and Sufi mysticism, at no stage does he come close to saying that Nanak was a Sufi, quite the contrary in fact. [161]

Yet, Raza is so fixated on proving his messiah’s claim that not only does he misrepresent Pincott’s apparent position on Nanak’s real identity by quoting him selectively, but even goes so far as to grossly misinterpret extracts cited as proof. The latter is no better demonstrated than in the following where Raza quotes Pincott as stating:

A curious incident is next related to the effect that Makhdum Baha’u’d-Din, the Pir of Multan, feeling his end approaching, said to his disciples, “O friends, from this time the faith of no one will remain firm; all will become faithless (*be-iman*).” His disciples asked for an explanation; and in reply he delivered himself of an oracular statement: “O friends, when one Hindu shall come to Heaven (*bihisht*), there will be brilliancy (*ujala*) in Heaven.” To this strange announcement his disciples replied: “Learned people say that Heaven is not decreed for the Hindus; what is this that you have said?” (*I.O. MS.* 1728, fol. 224.) The Pir told them that he was alluding to Nanak; and sent one of his disciples to ask Nanak if he, also, had received an intimation of his approaching death.

In this anecdote we have the extraordinary admission from a Muhammadan that **Nanak would succeed in BREAKING UP the faith of Islam. It is in consequence of a Hindu’s having conquered Heaven itself, and vindicated his right to a place in the paradise of Muhammad, that those who were then in the faith of the Prophet would LOSE CONFIDENCE in his teaching.** Here again, the words employed are useful; for the Pir is made to say that Muslims will become *be-iman*, the Arabic term specially applicable to the “faith” of Islam; and Heaven is called in the Panjabi story *bhisat*, that is *bihisht*, the Paradise of Muhammadans [see PARADISE]; for had the Hindu heaven been intended, some such

word as *swarg*, or *paralok*, or *Brahmalok* would have been used. [162] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

Here, Pincott understands from the “extraordinary admission” of a Muslim Pir that once Nanak, **who is identified as a Hindu**, successfully conquers *Jannah*, not only will this culminate in Muslims losing faith in the teachings of Muhammad (Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him), but that Nanak will also have “succeed[ed] in breaking up the faith of Islam”. Raza, on the other hand, entirely fails to appreciate the dire implications of Pincott’s interpretation by not only ignoring Nanak’s destructive role in weakening Islam, but also his religious identity. Apart from seeing this as merely an “interesting story”, Raza simplistically deduces that “a Muslim saint tells his disciples that the Muslims of his time have become be-iman (faithless) and now a Hindu is entering Behisht (Paradise)”. And though he curiously acknowledges that a Hindu will enter paradise at the expense of the Muslims, he fails entirely in identifying Nanak as this Hindu! Hence, rather than the source proving Nanak’s Muslim credentials, it actually cites a *Pir* – Nanak’s very own coreligionist – as blaming him for “breaking up the faith of Islam”!

Another example of Raza’s faulty analytical skills occurs when he covers the story of Nanak’s first alleged revelatory experience followed by his interrogation at the hands of a qazi in the presence of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodi. In this instance, Pincott states:

From the foregoing it is perfectly clear that the immediate successors of Nanak believed that he went very close to Muhammadanism; and we can scarcely doubt the accuracy of their view of the matter, when we consider the almost contemporaneous character of the record, from which extracts have been given, and the numerous confirmatory evidences contained in the religion itself... Another significant fact is that when Nanak speaks of himself as the servant of God, he employs the word *Khuda*, a Persian Muhammadan term, but when his brother-in-law Jairam speaks of God, he uses the Hindu word *Paramesur*. It will, also, be noticed that Muhammadans are affected by the logic and piety of Nanak, and to them he shows himself so partial that he openly accompanies them to the mosque, and thereby causes his Hindu neighbours and friends to believe that he is actually converted to the faith of Islam. But, of course, the most remarkable expression of all is the emphatic and repeated announcement that “There is no Hindu, there is no Musalman.” This can mean nothing else than that it was Nanak’s settled intention to do away with the differences between those two forms of belief, **by instituting a third course which should SUPERSEDE both of them.** (bold, capitalisation ours)

While Pincott acknowledges that the immediate successors of Nanak believed him to be “very close to Muhammadism”, he, nevertheless, lays stress on the fact that the famous clause “there is no Hindu; there is no Musalman” articulated by Nanak emphatically indicates that he had instituted a **third course** that was meant “to do away with the differences between” Islam and Hinduism by superseding them both.

Despite this, Raza again ignores Pincott’s conclusion and in its place chooses to understand the event as having “stated that Baba Nanak then proceeded to offer prayer with the whole congregation and the news spread in the town that Baba Nanak has become Muslim”! It is difficult to see how Raza, and Raza alone, reached this vacuous conclusion given the story only reveals that when “[t]he time of the afternoon prayer had come. All arose and went (to the mosque) to prayers, and the Baba (Nanak) also went with them. Nanak then demonstrated his supernatural power by reading the thoughts of the Qazi. Then the Qazi came and fell

down at his feet, exclaiming, ‘Wonderful, wonderful! [O]n this one is the favour of God.’ Then the Qazi believed; and Nanak uttered this stanza”. Once Nanak had completed his recital, it is said that “the people, Hindus and Musulmans, began to say to the Khan that God (Khuda) was speaking in Nanak” (India Office MS 1728, fol. 36-41).

Notice, however, that there is no apparent confirmation that Nanak actually took part in the prayers. It is only said that Nanak “went with them” before allegedly exhibiting his supernatural powers. What is more significant is how Raza inexplicably clips the paragraph immediately succeeding the above which actually serves as evidence *for* him rather than against him! Pincott further reveals:

The foregoing anecdotes are taken from the India Office MS., No. 1728; but the ordinary *Janam-Sakhis* current in the Punjab vary the account somewhat by saying that when the Khan reproved Nanak for not coming to him when sent for, the latter replied: “Hear, O Nawab, when I was thy servant I came before thee; now I am not thy servant; now I am become the servant of Khuda (God).’ The Nawab said: ‘Sir, (if) you have become such, then come with me and say prayers (*niwaj* = *nimaz*). It is Friday’. Nanak said: ‘Go, Sir.’ The Nawab, with the Qazi and Nanak, and a great concourse of people, went into the Jami Masjid and stood there. All the people who came into the Masjid began to say, ‘Today Nanak has entered this sect.’ There was a commotion among the respectable Hindus in Sultanpur; and Jairam, being much grieved, returned home. Nanaki perceiving that her husband came home dejected, rose up and said, ‘Why is it that you are today so grieved?’ Jairam replied, ‘Listen, O servant of *Paramesur* (God), what has thy brother Nanak done? He has gone, with the Nawab, **into the Jami Masjid to PRAY**; and, in the city, there is an outcry among the Hindus and Mussulmans that Nanak has become a Turk (Muslim) today.” (India Office MS., No. 2885, fol. 39.) [163] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

Nanak: “In this dark age Nanak starts a pure religion. **I do not accept** the Vedas or **the Quran**. I accept only God.” – *Bala Janamsakhi Lines 14-15, page 118*.

At this juncture, it seems as though Nanak’s brother-in-law believes that Nanak participated in prayer which results in an outcry from the Hindus, at least in a negative sense given that as a Hindu Jairam was grieved over Nanak’s alleged conversion. Note, however, that the account in MS 2885 does not seem to tally with that in MS 1728. In the former, it is reported that there was commotion among the respectable Hindus along with grief displayed by Nanak’s brother-in-law, Jairam, over his alleged conversion. Yet in the latter, the Hindus are made to recognise that God had spoken through Nanak. This raises the question of how the Hindu community could have acknowledged such a thing for a coreligionist who they saw as having abandoned their faith for Islam. If Nanak had participated in the prayers as a Muslim at said mosque, it makes little sense for the Hindus present to then claim that “God was speaking in Nanak”.

Notwithstanding this apparent discrepancy, a solution can, nonetheless, be found by making recourse not only to the most ancient, but also to as wide a range of *janam sakhis* as possible. In Pincott’s case, of course, such an option was absent given that the *Puratan JS* was not published until 1926 by Vir Singh. Thus, when we turn to a more thorough and detailed evaluation of the *janam sakhi* tradition, we find that there is certainly more to this than first appeared to Pinchott, Hughes, and, of course, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad back in the nineteenth century.

NANAK PRAYS WITH NAWAB DAULAT KHAN LODI

The availability of a far broader range of extant *janam sakhis*, which includes the oldest and most authoritative *Puratan* version, has enabled us today to uncover vital information that offers up a definitive answer to the question of whether Nanak participated in the Friday (*jumu'ah*) prayers and/ or converted to Islam.

It seems that in this context their discovery would not have made much of a difference because, as it so happens, the very same source that Pincott and Ghulam Ahmad, and perhaps to a lesser extent Raza, relied upon and presumably had access to already offered a solution which these protagonists either innocently missed or purposefully overlooked.

Let us recount the entire story as reproduced and translated by Ernest Trumpp:

The Navab, the Kazi, Nanak and many innumerable people went together and stood in the great mosque. As many people as were in the mosque, they all began to say in their place, that Nanak has today come over to this side, and among all the respectable Hindus in Sultanpur a noise was made. Jairam was much grieved and went home. When Nanaki saw that her lord was much grieved, she rose and said: "What is the matter to-day, that thou hast come so grieved?" Jairam replied: "Hear, servant of God, what thy brother Nanak has done! he is gone with the Navab to the great mosque to say prayers! and in the whole town, among Hindus and Musalmans, a noise is made, that to-day Nanak is coming over to this side; why should I not be grieved?" Nanaki said: "Compose thy mind, rise and eat food! do not be in anxiety about Nanak! Nanak, my brother, is under his (i.e. God's) strong protection, no one is able to look towards Nanak with a bad eye; rise thou and eat with joy!" Whilst they were talking thus, a noise arose. Jairam had left Nidha, the Brahman, as a spy; he came and congratulated Jairam, (saying): "O patron, comfort and joy set in! no apprehension is to be made!" Jairam and Nanaki began to ask Nidha: "Tell, Nidha, how has it happened?" Nidha said: "I was not within (the mosque), but **I have heard it from the mouth of the Turks that the Navab made his prayer and that Nanak remained standing.** When the Navab had finished his prayer, he began to say to Nanak: '**Nanak, thou hadst come to make prayers, why didst thou NOT say them?**' Nanak replied: 'With whom shall I make prayers?' The Navab said: 'Thou shouldst have made them with us.' Nanak replied: 'Thou hadst gone to Kandahar in order to buy horses, with whom shall I pray?' Daulat Khan said: 'O Nanak, thou art telling so much falsehood, I am standing here.' Nanak replied: 'Hear, Khan, thy body was standing here, and he who was saying the prayers had gone to Kandahar to buy horses.' Then the Kazi said: 'Navab, health! how much falsehood **is the HINDU** telling!' The Navab replied: 'Kazi, Nanak is truthful. At the time of bowing down my spirit had gone to Kandahar for the sake of horses.' Again the Kazi made a calumny (saying): 'Hear, Khan! we surely had not gone, **he [Nanak] should have said prayers with us!**' Then the Navab said: '**Nanak thou shouldst have prayed with the Kazi!**' Nanak replied: 'Navab, the Kazi had gone to his house to take care of a colt, "perhaps my colt may be falling into the pit." ...

Jairam became very happy and began to ask Nanak: "O brother Nanak, how did the mentioned affair happen? tell thy own story, what is heard from thy own mouth, that is genuine information." Nanak said: "brother-in-law! Daulat Khan and the Kazi began to say their prayers, **WE REMAINED STANDING BY.** "When he (the Khan) had finished his prayers, he began to say: 'Nanak, hast thou come to say, prayers or to stand here, thou hast not said prayers.' [\[164\]](#) (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

While Pincott could be excused for failing to cite the above portion of the story given that he never argued for the Muslim identity of Nanak, the same, of course, cannot be said of Ahmad who miserably failed to make any mention of this pivotal account. The question is why? Did he or his followers never have access to the *Bala JS*? If not, then why have they continued to remain silent while consistently repeating their founder's false arguments? Did Raza, Maulana Barkatullah, Abdul Jaleel, and the rest of Ahmad's *khaleefas* and adherents never pick up a copy of Trumpp's partial translation of the *Adi Granth* published as early as 1877 (eight years before the publication of Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*) which contained the above? It simply beggars belief.

It is crystal clear from the above that:

1. Nidha reports from the "mouth of the Turks", i.e. the Muslims that Nanak did not participate when the prayers got under way, but rather remained standing.
2. Had Nanak, for arguments sake, converted, it is inconceivable for a Muslim, let alone a respected qazi, to accuse a fellow faithful of being an idol-worshipping and spiritually impure Hindu.
3. The Nawab himself accusingly questioned Nanak over his non-participation asking why he refused to join them in prayer presumably in response to Nanak's claim that he had "become the servant of Khuda (God)". In Islam, becoming a servant of the God entails becoming a Muslim by proclaiming the Testification of Faith before participating in prayer.
4. Nanak's own testimony that he remained standing by, thus, allaying the initial fears of Jairam and confirming that he had not converted to Islam.

Recall how quick Ahmad was in stamping his seal of approval on the apparent authenticity and authoritative nature of said tradition; one wonders whether such praise was made without him having direct access to this work or any other Sikh tradition that contained this story. Or was he relying solely on the nine-page entry penned down by Pincott, which he managed, nevertheless, to misconstrue and misrepresent anyway.

How could such a slipshod approach, poor argumentation skills, and overarching disingenuousness befit an academic let alone a Prophet-Messiah of God?

But to drive the nail firmly in Ahmad's coffin, let us turn to an in depth study of the other available *janam sakhis* to snuff out any shred of doubt that might remain *vis-à-vis* this incident. Kirpal Singh goes into some detail by comparing a variety of *janam sakhis* to acquire a more thorough historical analysis of this event:

The first words that Guru Nanak uttered after he came out of the Bein were "There is no Hindu and no Musalman." This caused a furore throughout Sultanpur. All were astonished on hearing these words because Sultanpur was a centre of Muslim learning and it was not devoid of danger to say so in the Muslim regime. People went to Daulat Khan and informed him that Nanak was repeatedly uttering the words "there is no Hindu and no Musalman." Daulat Khan sent for Nanak. At the same time he sent for the *qazi* of the town.

This should be cause for concern for anyone looking to this story as proof of Nanak's Muslim identity. It is obvious that the consternation caused by such words was controversial enough to not only force the people to report the case to Daulat Khan, but also sensitive enough to force his hand into calling for the town's qazi. A qazi is a learned Muslim scholar who

specialises in the interpretation of Islamic law and is responsible for issuing legal decrees, or *fatwas*. It is, therefore, plausible to assume that the reason why this qazi was summoned was to ascertain whether such a proclamation contravened the Shari'ah.

When Nanak came to Daulat Khan, the *qazi* was already there. Seeing Nanak in an ascetic's robes, Daulat Khan gave him due respect and said that the *qazi* has a question to ask. Nanak looked at the *qazi* who asked: "You say that there is no Hindu and no Musalman. What is meant by this? Does the faith founded by Prophet Muhammad not exist?" [\[165\]](#)

This question is telling since it reveals the qazi's underlying motive – to determine whether Nanak, who has thus far remained unclear *vis-à-vis* his religious identity, was a Muslim, and if so, whether he had, thus, broken the law by blaspheming the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him).

Nanak replied that it is difficult to be a Musalman. One has to live life as per the will of God. Getting one's mind cleansed of ego and inculcating compassion, mercy and love for all is the true path of religion and only the rare tread this path. Guru Nanak enunciated this in the following hymn:

Hard it is to deserve the name of Musalman.
Only one truly so, may such be called.
First, must he hold in love the way of the holy;
Like iron on grindstone should he cast off his possessions.
In the way of the Preceptor should he have faith, And banish illusion of death and life.
To the Lord's will should he be obedient: With faith in the Creator as compassionate he becomes,
May he be called a Mussalman. – Guru Granth Sahib, p.142
Five are the Muslim prayers; five their appointed hours, Five their names.
These be the true prayers:
Truthfulness is the first, legitimate earning the second;
The third, prayer to God for universal weal.
The fourth is sincerity of heart and mind;
The fifth, laudation of God. Recite the Kalima of noble acting.
Thus may one be truly called Mussalman.
Saith Nanak: Of all hypocrites, ignoble is the end. – Guru Granth Sahib, p. 141

The *qazi* said, "Hindus have one path and the Muslims have another. Which path do you tread?" Nanak replied, "I am on the path to God, and God is neither Hindu nor Muslim." [\[166\]](#) The *qazi* again said, "If you are on the path to God, it is now time to say the *namaz*: you may accompany us (to the mosque) and say the prayers." Nanak agreed to go with him to say the *namaz*. Daulat Khan, the *qazi* and the Nanak went to the mosque to say *namaz*. [\[167\]](#)

Note that although the questions posed by the qazi, which are directly related to ascertaining Nanak's religious identity, provide him with the perfect opportunity to openly acknowledge his Islamic allegiance, he instead chooses, and for very good reasons too as we see in what follows, to equivocate in his answers.

When Guru Nanak went to the mosque to say *namaz*, the Hindus of the town became apprehensive that the *qazi* and Daulat Khan might convert Nanak to Islam since they had succeeded in making him [go] to the mosque for the prayer. Jai Ram also shared similar

apprehensions with Nanaki as he came home. Nanaki was a person with firm faith and she was sure of her brother's commitment. So she allayed Jai Ram's fears on Nanak's count. [168] The qazi, Daulat Khan and Nanak stood in a row. The *qazi* and Daulat Khan began saying their *namaz* and Nanak only attentively looked at them. Once he looked at the *qazi* and laughed because he had a strong insight to assume that the *qazi's* mind was not in the *namaz*, rather it was in something else. When the *namaz* was over, the *qazi* asked Nanak in a furious tone, "O Nanak! Why did you laugh at my saying the *namaz*?" Nanak patiently replied, "Your *namaz* has not been accepted (in the Divine Court) because your mind was somewhere else. Since you yourself were not present in the *namaz*, I could not have been with you in saying it." [169] This enraged the *qazi* furthermore, and he declared that his mind was very much in the prayer, but you were laughing standing nearby.

It is actually worth quoting the qazi's displeasure directly from the *Puratan JS* since he reveals the following to Khan:

[T]he Kazi said: "Khan, health! hast thou seen, that **the HINDU**, looking towards the Musalmans, was laughing? thou, who art saying, that Nanak is a good man." [170] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

Kirpal continues:

Nanak said that it was not necessary that mere physical bowing could mean homage to God. It was the mind that had to pay the homage, and that one could do any way. Similarly, if mind was in the *namaz*, one might say it any way; but if the mind was not in the prayer and was rather anxious about the new-born filly at home, such saying of *namaz* was of no use. Listening this, the *qazi* was astonished. He realized that Nanak had correctly assessed his mental state. Finding *qazi* in such bewilderment, Daulat Khan asked *qazi* the reason of his silence. He replied, what Nanak had said was right. [171]

Listening this, Daulat Khan was also highly surprised. He again asked the *qazi* if it was true that his mind wandered to the new-born filly at home while he was saying *namaz* in the mosque. The *qazi* replied that Nanak had the correct insight. Both the *qazi* and Daulat Khan were surprised. [172], [173][padding]

From the above, it is apparent that the story, rather than hinting at Nanak's Muslim identity, lays bare his ploy in exposing the local Muslims so as to support his new found conviction of there being "no Hindus and no Musalmans". Simply put, there is not a shred of evidence in any of the *janam sakhis*, particularly Bala's, in support of the Ahmadiyya's hyperbolic arguments, and yet plenty to prove that Nanak was anything but a Muslim or, more precisely, a heretical Sufi.

As a matter of fact, the spin, hyperbole and subreption resorted to in the above is a common feature employed with impunity by the Ahmadiyya in almost all of their presuppositional arguments.

Take, for instance, Abdul Jaleel's contentious boast that "a careful study of Sikh traditions and relics of Sikhism lead to an irrefutable conclusion that Guru Nanak discarded the Hindu doctrines and assimilated the teachings of Islam to such an extent that Sikhism, in its pristine form, can be looked upon as a sect of Islam". We have already provided just one example of what happens when the Ahmadiyya undertake a "careful study" of anything; and in what

follows, we shall provide even more examples of shoddy research and poorly contrived arguments.

NANAK'S EARLY LIFE

Regarding the early life of Guru Nanak, Abdul Jaleel asserts:

The whole history of Sikhism shows that its founder, though born a Hindu, mixed with Muslims, joined in their prayers and performed other Islamic obligations, all in public. ... It was a Muslim Sufi he constantly turned to for advice and there is not a single instance in his life which indicated that he bowed his head to a Hindu pandit. [\[174\]](#)

This grand argument fails to stand up to even the most superficial of inquiries into a select number of historical sources let alone an exhaustive examination of the “whole history of Sikhism” as supposedly undertaken by the good professor.

The only instance where Nanak is said to have participated in prayer that we know of is when he was probed by Daulat Khan Lodi; an affair where Nanak not only refused to pray, but was dubbed a Hindu by the qazi while confirming and maintaining his non-Muslim identity.

As for the Sufi that Nanak is said to have constantly turned to, then it is likely that Abdul Jaleel here is referring to the same person his compatriot, Barkatullah, cites when referencing Giani Gian Singh's (d. 1921 CE) *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* – a voluminous encyclopedia that was first published as late as 1891: [\[175\]](#)

Baba Nanak was educated by a Muslim religious scholar and theologian Syed Mir Hasan who lived in his neighbourhood. Syed Mir himself was a saint and shared with Baba Nanak many spiritual experiences and secrets (*Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 86). [\[176\]](#)

Of important note is the fact that the first person to give this Muslim teacher said name was not Gian, but, as Harbans Singh reveals, Ghulam Hussain Khan in his work, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*:

Ghulam Hussain Khan specifically mentions the name of a Muslim scholar and dervish, Syed Hasan, as Guru Nanak's teacher during his boyhood at Talwandi. This is one **new point of fact** which emerges, **but it is traceable to NO antecedent source**. (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

The problem for the Ahmadiyya is that since this work was first “written in 1780” [\[177\]](#) – almost **250 years after Nanak's death** – it would, like *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, have to be dismissed as historically unreliable as per the standards of Ghulam Ahmad.

What is more, while Harbans adds that Nanak's “knowledge of Sufi lore is traced to his early contact with ... Sayyid Hasan”, [\[178\]](#) and Kartar Singh highlights that “[a]ccording to the author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, Guru Nanak studied Islamic literature from Sayyad Hassan, a *darvesh*”, [\[179\]](#) it is impossible to correctly conclude that Nanak was a Muslim for merely having either allegedly turned to this teacher for advice and guidance, or for having derived his knowledge of whatever version of Islam this dervish practiced.

Alas, this is the dilemma that the Ahmadiyya face where on the one side they are quick to cite any source that meets their requirements no matter how historically dubious, whilst on the other are compelled to tow the party line.

Hence, when assertions are forwarded similar to the following made by Barkatullah that “Baba Nanak also visited Sarhand Sharif and spent forty days in fasting and worshipping on the burial place of a celebrated saint Kh. Abdul Shakoor” [180] from the same book, “Tawarikh Khalsa, p. 224”, not only is it prudent to question the credibility of a book written almost 400 years after the fact, but it is imperative that the Ahmadiyya be taken to task. Either Qadianis like Barkatullah and Abdul Jaleel openly reject the peculiar conditions of historical authenticity observed by their messiah, or adhere to them, but be brave enough to take their position to its logical conclusion, i.e. to reject any non-contemporary Nanakian sources, like Bala’s hagiography and *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*.

This, however, is the least of their worries. Their biggest problem is the *Bala JS* itself which, when examined in detail, stands as evidence against rather than for them.

THE AHMADIYYA’S ACHILLES’ HEEL

When one studies the hagiography attributed to Bala, it quickly becomes apparent that what Ghulam Ahmad touted as one of his greatest proofs actually turns out to be his Achilles’ heel.

All serious academics involved in the study of Sikh hagiographies recognise the mythical overlay and fictional elements pervasive throughout these records. In fact, this feature is so obvious that even Abdul Jaleel is forced to concede: “It is true that in [Bala’s] *Janam Sakhi* one finds much fiction mixed with facts.” [181]

It is discernable that when the Ahmadiyya cite this source as evidence, they invariably do so by selectively quoting, cheery picking, or distorting the facts in much the same way they have done with the sources of Islam. It is this fallacious approach that we intend to expose and examine in this section through a range of examples.

This will be achieved by exploring a far broader range of extant *janam sakhis* than the Ahmadiyya, who have restricted themselves to primarily Bala’s, have been willing or able to do. In turning to older and more authoritative sources, at least by Ahmad’s standards, not only will we be able to present a more complete and accurate picture of Nanak’s life, but also be in a better position to properly contextualise and, hence, reconcile between the contradictory historical accounts one encounters when undertaking such an holistic examination.

For instance, the Ahmadiyya have exploited certain references made in the *Bala JS*, as quoted below by Abdul Jaleel, wherein Nanak apparently supported certain fundamental tenets of Islam, including the Testification of Faith (*Kalimah*), the five daily prayers, and the fasting month of Ramadan, which Sikhism traditionally rejects:

On page 193 of Bala’s *Janam Sakhi*, we have: Nanak said, O Rukn-ud-Din, hear from me the true reply: the saying of the Lord is written in the Book. That person will go to hell who does not repeat the Kalima, who does not keep the thirty fasts, and does not say the five prayers, who eats what is not lawful for him. These shall receive the punishment and the fire of the bottomless pit shall be his abode. It is also reported that Baba Nanak kept fasts for a whole

year at Mecca and put his fingers in his ears and gave the call to prayer. It is also related that Nanak recited the Khutba of the Prophet and became happy. [182]

As regards the above, then either Abdul Jaleel has committed an honest mistake, or he is guilty of misrepresentation since the above was not uttered by Nanak, but rather Rukn-ud-Din. This is made clear at the beginning of the chapter which begins with the heading: “*Suaal rukn deen kazee*,” or: “Questions from Qazi Rukn ud-Deen.” [183] As to the report that Nanak kept fasts and gave the call to prayer, then no evidence has been cited for this. What is certain is that it is not part of the aforesaid quote.

The above misquotation, however, may not be as innocent as one might imagine. Two similar examples were also brought to the attention of Gurbachan Singh Sidhu who quotes a Qadiani as audaciously alleging that the *Bala JS* had Nanak going not only as far as supporting the doctrine of exclusive salvation for Islam, but also advocating the dual declaration of Islamic faith itself!

“Say sincerely that there is none to be worshipped but Allah and Mohammed is His prophet” (P. 139)

“I have read and listened to the Torah, the Gospels, Zaboor and the Vedas, only the Holy Quran is the means to salvation.” (P .143)

However, like us, Sidhu too is far from impressed for he not only brandishes these as “audacious misquotes” from one who has “taken them out of context and quoted what suited his purpose”, but also adds that this approach “typifies the challenge to Sikhism based on dishonest quotations and false evidence”. [184] Despite holding the *Bala JS* to be the work of the heterodox Hindali sect, [185] a view incidentally shared by a large number of Sikh scholars, he nevertheless reveals that these statements were never attributed to Nanak to begin with, but rather an imam named Karim Din:

Question: “Nanak Shah. I doubt if non-believers who burn their dead can ever deserve grace. The souls of the burnt relatives raise cries. They will find peace only if they accept Nabi Rasul. Without a belief in Muhammad no one can find a place in heaven. The Hindus are *kafirs* and say that the dead cannot be brought back to life and that Muhammad can render no help to the souls. I reject this view entirely. ***I have read and listened to the Torah, the Gospels and the Zaboor and I reject them along with the vedas. At this time only the Quran is the sovereign and can lead to salvation. Those who reject the Quran are Satans. They will suffer perdition and Muhammad will not intercede on their behalf.*** Please consider your answer again and clarify your stand point.”

Guru Nanak’s reply: “Karim Din, I respect your belief and surely you can quote the scriptures to support it. **I re-iterate that the dead CANNOT be raised.** Only names survive after death. Lakhs of Krishanas and millions of Muhamrnads have born and gone. Death comes to Emperors and prophets as it comes to ordinary mortals. Their bodies perish and no distinction remains between the dust of the princes and that of the paupers. All come and go. This is the divine law. Only God is immortal. Just as the leaves fall off and trees perish and give rise to other trees so do humans. Those who do not enshrine God in their hearts will bum even in their graves because their souls will suffer hell ”

The second quotation of your friend is also a question asked by the same Karim Din Sura. He asks, “Instead of worshipping one God why do the Hindus worship Brahma, Vishnu, Mahadev and Bhawani? You know, sir, that the truth is undivided and the Holy Quran says that God is one. We are commanded by the Quran to say **sincerely that there is none to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet**. Only one of them can be correct. You tell us which one is correct.” [\[186\]](#)

After emphatically declaring that “[t]here is no mention anywhere that he [Nanak] observed *ihram*, did *t[a]waf*, ran between *Safwa* and *Marwa* or sacrificed an animal ... rituals [that] are absolutely essential” for the pilgrimage of Hajj; “no evidence that he followed an Imam” for congregational prayer, nor “uttered Quranic verses in a pew”; and “absolutely no evidence that the Guru read the Kalima”, Sidhu reasons:

He will have said his prayers sitting among his Muslim friends. Who knows what one recites if the prayer is offered internally with deep conviction and not as a mere show? When I join the Christians (and I do so frequently) I keep on reciting the Guru’s words when the Christians say their own prayers. We all pray to the same God. I do not find anything wrong with saying prayers and opening our hearts to God in our own way. **Don’t forget that the Guru also visited the Hindu holy city of Jagan Nath and also joined the Hindus in prayers.** He has recorded this incident in his own words. There is no pretence, no hypocrisy and no falsehood involved in this. **I am a teacher and I have to attend the morning assemblies in my school everyday. But believe me I have not become a Christian.** ... Mecca is not the first place where the Guru joined the Muslims in prayer, he did this first at Sultanpur. [\[187\]](#) (bold ours)

In other words, it would be just as fallacious to argue that Nanak must have been a Hindu for having participated in prayer with Hindus as it is to conclude that he was a Muslim simply for having “said his prayers sitting among his Muslim friends”.

But relying on such claims that Nanak fasted for a year, performed both the daily prayers and pilgrimage, and recited sermons similar to Prophet Muhammad (Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) creates an additional problem of epic proportions in that these evidently stand in counterposition to those accounts where Nanak either:

- Refused to participate in congregational prayer when called upon by Muslims to prove his Islam while at the same time explicitly denying any rumours of his conversion (as detailed above).
- Was openly identified and called a Hindu sans any denial or disputes.
- Reinterpreted these Islamic practices, including frequenting of the mosque, the practice of circumcision, and other ritual fulfilments, with meanings that stood in stark contradiction to orthodoxy.
- Affirmed beliefs antithetical to Islam.

Regarding this last point, then take, for example, an important account recorded in the more ancient *Puratan JS* wherein Nanak answers Mardana’s query following a chance encounter with a one Sheikh Bajid Sayyid in which Nanak unequivocally affirms his belief in reincarnation and transmigration:

The ascetics, who in a **former birth** have borne the sting of cold,
Were then worn out; now, Nanak, they adorn their body. [\[188\]](#) (bold ours)

McLeod translates this more clearly as follows:

Baba Nanak answered him, ‘All who enter the world come naked from the womb. Joy and pain come in accordance with the deeds of **one’s previous existence.**’ [\[189\]](#),[\[190\]](#) (bold ours)

Later in the same source and in response to Rukn ud-Deen, Nanak responds:

Says Nanak, listen, O mind, to the **True Teachings**. Opening His ledger, God will call you to account. Those rebels who have unpaid accounts shall be called out. Azraa-eel, the Angel of Death, shall be appointed to punish them. **They will find no way to escape coming and going in reincarnation;** they are trapped in the narrow path. [\[191\]](#) (bold ours)

To make matters worse, the Kapoors make mention of a damning piece of testimony from Bala in *Saakhis* 115-119 where Nanak goes so far as to claim that Prophet Muhammad (Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) would again transmigrate into a Hindu family after 1500 years because of sins he committed in his first life!

When Mardana came back from a visit to the Prophet’s grave, the Guru told him that Mohammed would again come back into this world after 1500 years and will take birth in a Hindu family. In his first birth in Mecca he got entangled with the three Gunas: Rajas, Sattav and Tamas, but in his second birth he will remain detached from these Gunas. [\[192\]](#)

While these three *Gunas* originate from the *Samkhya* School of classical Indian philosophy, they have also been incorporated into Sikh religious thought. [\[193\]](#) Nanak, for example, presents these three qualities in the SGGS as follows:

The three qualities hold the body in bondage; whoever comes into the world is subject to their play. Those who separate themselves from Waheguru, they wander around, lost in misery. The self-willed *manmukhs* do not attain union with Waheguru. (SGGS, 21)

The Kapoors elucidate further by explaining:

The Hindu scriptures mention three types of temperament or qualities which bound a human, they are: Satik (Sat), Rajas (Raj) and Tamas (Tam). Where Sat refers to calm and compassion, Raj refers to pride and Tam refers to ignorance. [\[194\]](#)

Hence, according to Bala, Nanak considered Muhammad (Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) to have been a *Manmukh*, which, as demonstrated in our article: [Manmukh, Kafir, and the Infidel](#), would be equivalent to the Islamic classification: *kaafir* (disbeliever).

What is more, this testimony is entirely consistent with a number of verses attributed to Nanak in the SGGS where he again made clear his beliefs. These include:

O Nanak, by the Hukam of God’s Command, we come and go in reincarnation. (SGGS 4)

You shall not be consigned again to the wheel of reincarnation. (SGGS 13)

Their comings and goings in reincarnation do not end; through death and rebirth, they are wasting away. (SGGS 19)

All the world continues coming and going in reincarnation. (SGGS 26)

No one merges with Him through the love of duality; over and over again, they come and go in reincarnation. (SGGS 27)

Additionally, Nanak also upheld the theory of karma and its association with past lives:

Born because of the karma of their past mistakes, they make more mistakes, and fall into mistakes (SGGS 149) (bold ours)

Take to the Lord, the Destroyer of the sins and **karma of past incarnations** (*JANAM JANAM KE PAAP*). (SGGS 156) (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

There is then Nanak's inexplicable theory of the Hindu idol, shiv lingam, said to have been present in the *Ka'bah* itself as recorded again in the *Bala JS* and summarised by the Kapoors below:

The entry into Kaaba was restricted to Mujaawars only, and they too were allowed in only when they were tightly blind 'folded. Mardana was not allowed to enter the building, he came back to Guru Nanak and insisted that he definitely wanted to go inside the building. The Guru sent Mardana back and told him that this time no one would object to his entry and he would not be blind folded either. Inside Kaaba, Mardana saw a large statue (other entrants could not see the statue as they all were blind folded), on enquiry the Guru told Mardana that the statue was of Mahadev (Shiv). Mardana wondered that how a Hindu god's statue was in Kaaba. Guru told him that once, when, a king named Khunkar Hussain ordered the idol to be removed, the houses of all Mujaawars caught fire. The king ordered that the idol be re-installed and himself bowed to the idol. At that moment the king heard a voice, "Instal the idol but no one is allowed to see it, those who would endeavour to see it will go blind." Since that day the entry to Kaaba has been restricted and those who are allowed in are blind folded. [\[195\]](#)

This story does not have a word of truth to it. For one, it has been authentically recorded in a number of ancient sources that the 360 idols stored therein by the polytheist Arabs were completely destroyed by Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) immediately following his peaceful overtaking of Makkah. In *Sahih al-Bukhari*, it is related:

Ibn Mas'ood narrated that the Messenger of Allah entered Mecca (in the year of the Conquest) and there were 360 idols around the Ka'bah. He then **started hitting them with a stick in his hand** proclaiming saying: "Truth (i.e. Islam) has come and falsehood (disbelief) vanished. Truly falsehood (disbelief) is ever bound to vanish." (Qur'an 17.81) "Truth has come and falsehood (Iblis) cannot create anything." (Qur'an 34.49)

Ibn 'Abbas narrated that when the Messenger of Allah arrived in Mecca, he refused to enter the Ka'bah while there were idols in it. **So he ordered that they be taken out.**

This is supported in some of the early biographies of Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and the books of history including the one below by Ibn Ishaq (d. 150AH/ 767CE) who elaborated:

[F]rom ‘Ali b. ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbas: The apostle entered Mecca on the day of the conquest and it contained 360 idols which Iblis [Satan] [196] had strengthened with lead. The apostle was standing by them with a stick in his hand, saying, ‘The truth has come and falsehood has passed away; verily falsehood is sure to pass away’ (Sura 17.82). Then he pointed at them with his stick and they collapsed on their backs one after the other.

When the apostle prayed the noon prayer on the day of the conquest he ordered that **ALL the idols which were round the Ka’ba should be collected and burned with fire and broken up**. Fadala b. al-Mulawwih al-Laythi said commemorating the day of the conquest:

Had you seen Muhammad and his troops
The day the idols were smashed when he entered,
You would have seen God’s light become manifest
And darkness covering the face of idolatry. [197] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

Nanak responded: At God’s door there are a hundred thousand Muhammads ... who claim to be greatest of all. – *Bala Janamsakhi no. 125*

This purging of the Ka’bah from the filth of idolatry was only in fulfilment of the command of Allah as recorded in *Sahih Muslim* (832) wherein ‘Urwah ibn ‘Abasah narrated that he said to the Prophet (Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him): “With what were you sent?” Muhammad replied: “I was sent to uphold the ties of kinship and **to break the idols** so that Allah would be worshipped alone with no partner or associate.”

How then were these additional idols reintroduced back into the Ka’bah, as Nanak alleged, and who initiated this absurd ritual of entering the Ka’bah blind-folded?! Simply put, there is no credible evidence to support such fiction.

The Ahmadiyya have also exploited references in the *Bala JS* where the practice of quintessential Islamic praxis is said to have been supported and encouraged by Nanak. Abdul Jaleel alludes to this by suggesting that Nanak spoke favourably of the Qur’an:

On page 134 of *Janam Sakhi*, we read, The Quran is divided into thirty sections, proclaim thou, this Quran in the four comers of this world. Declare the glory of one name only for none other is an associate with me. Nanak proclaims the word of God that came to him, thou hast been granted the rank of Sheikh, so thou shouldst abolish the worship of gods and goddesses and the old Hindu idol – temples. [198]

But, how will the Ahmadiyya be able to reconcile this argument with Nanak’s aforementioned anti-Islamic beliefs both of which, it should go without saying, stand diametrically opposed? The answer lies in the fact that Nanak actually opposed, to some level of degree, both the external rituals of Islam and the authority of the Qur’an and Prophetic Sunnah. In this respect, Rizvi contends:

Guru Nanak does not denounce Islam or Hinduism as such, but condemns everything that has come between Islam and Hinduism, as he saw them, and their basic reality. In Guru Nanak’s view, only the Reality and the Creative Truth have any importance, **the literal meanings of the Vedas or the Qur’an are of no help**. They are not necessarily to be rejected, but the essence of the Divine Truth should not be considered to be confined to them alone. [199] (bold ours)

The *Bala JS* actually makes clear Nanak's position quite emphatically by quoting him as declaring: "In this dark age Nanak starts a pure religion. **I do not accept** the Vedas or **the Quran**. I accept only God. (Lines 14-15 page 118)". [\[200\]](#) (bold ours)

Courtright too concurs stating:

Guru Nanak rejected the authority of both the Hindu and the Muslim scriptures. This was tied up with his rejection of scripturalism in general. Any religious writing had validity so long as it was transparent to the true God who inspired it. [\[201\]](#)

In fact, both Rizvi and Courtright agree that Nanak was, in general, against "conventionalism", "formalism of ritual" and "pride of worship". While the former says: "He [Nanak] urges that the effort to seek Him in **places of worship and centres of pilgrimage is futile**. He is hidden 'within' the searcher and only a true Guru directs him to the right path," [\[202\]](#) (bold ours) the latter adds:

We have seen that Guru Nanak must be understood neither as a reconciler of traditions nor as a self-conscious new initiator of a tradition, but he should be looked upon as one who provoked men to **see the true worship behind the formalism of ritual**. ...

We can best understand the foundation of Sikhism as a protest against conventionalism, and not against Hinduism and Islam as such. It was a protest against pride of worship, **scripture** and caste. [\[203\]](#) (bold ours)

Kohli is altogether more emphatic concluding: "The Guru was against **ALL ritualism and formalism**. He laid stress on practical life of inward purity." [\[204\]](#) (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

As for the issue of pilgrimage in general, then Rizvi stresses:

Guru Nanak's long and laborious journeys were **not intended as pilgrimages; he condemned both Hindus and Muslims for regarding pilgrimage as a means of gaining religious merit**. He seems to have travelled to obtain personal acquaintance with as many recognized centres of spiritual life as he could; and to spread his message of Divine Unity and Truth to different sections of mankind. [\[205\]](#) (bold ours)

One noteworthy way in which "he insisted upon inner content of the outer forms of religious worship", as Kohli puts it, was by reinterpreting some of the most important aspects of Islam, such as, the five daily prayers, fasting, frequenting of the mosque, circumcision, and, as already mentioned, pilgrimage and the Qur'an. Kohli offers an insight into this with the following example:

About the ideal conduct of a Muslim he has stipulated:

"A Muslim can only be called a Muslim if he considered the Grace of the Lord as his mosque, faith as his prayer-mat, the rightful earning as the Quran, the effort as the circumcision and the character as the fast." [\[206\]](#), [\[207\]](#)

Nanak, in fact, even had the temerity to belittle the status of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) as part of the first pillar of Islam, i.e. the Declaration of Faith. Kohli states in this regard:

Guru Nanak believed like Islam in monotheism, but he rejected the idea of the prophethood of God. ... The Muslim divines of Mecca and Hajis told Guru Nanak that THE FIRST is ONE GOD and the SECOND is the Prophet. But Guru Nanak retorted instantly that THE FIRST is ONE GOD and neither there had been nor there would ever be any SECOND. [208]

This excerpt is found in the *Puratan JS*:

Then Mia Mitha, came to the interview; having saluted he sat down. Mia Mitha, said then: [] "The first is the name of God, the second the prophet Nanak, if thou read the Kalima, thou wilt be accepted at the threshold." The Baba answered: "The first is the name of God, the prophet is the cowkeeper at the gate. Shekh, if thou make a right aim, thou wilt be accepted at the threshold. The Baba, added: "O Shekh Mitha, at that gate there is no place for two; whoever remains there, he remains there having become one (with God)." [209]

Nanak is quoted further by Bala in story no. 125 of downplaying the true status of the Prophet of Islam. In answer to Vira Naon Malar's query, who "inquired how was True God like and where he lived [*sic*]; whether He was a Muslim, as they had heard that Muhammed was near to God and that Hindus say that Brahma, Bishan and Mahesh were God-like", Nanak responded:

At God's door there are a **hundred thousand Muhammads** and a hundred thousand Brahmas, Vishnus and Shivas. There are hundreds of thousands of Ramas, **who claim to be greatest of all**, and there are hundreds of thousands of "ways" (religions) and hundreds and thousands of sectarian garbs. There are hundreds of thousands of celibates, philanthropists and ascetics. There are hundreds of thousands of Gorakhs and hundreds of thousands of masters of the Jogis....

Guru Nanak told Malar that the Creator is Formless and is Infinite, no one can know His vast expanse. [210] (bold ours)

Muslims have complete consensus over the fact that Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was not only the greatest of God's designated Prophets and Messengers, but also the best of humankind. In an authentic tradition related in the *Sahih* of Imam Muslim, Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said:

I will be the leader of the sons of Adam on the Day of Resurrection, and the first one for whom the grave is opened, and the first one to intercede, and the first one whose intercession will be accepted. (Sahih Muslim)

Aside from this, there is also an authentic tradition attributed to Ibn Mas'ud, one of the most erudite of the companions, in which the undisputed superiority of his Prophet is established:

"Whoever wants to adopt a way from amongst you, let him adopt the way of those who died (because the living is not safe from Fitnah), they were the companions of the Prophet having the best hearts of this Ummah, most profound in knowledge, least in formalities; Allah chose them to accompany His Prophet, and to establish His *Deen*. Allah looked into the hearts of

His slaves and found that Muhammad's heart is the best. Thus, He chose him for Himself and sent him with His Message. Then, He looked into the hearts of his slaves after His look into Muhammad's heart, and found that those of Muhammad's companions were the best hearts. Thus, He chose them as aides to His Prophet; fighting in the cause of His *Deen*. Whatever the Muslims consider as good, then it is good with Allah, and whatever they consider as bad, then, with Allah, it is also bad; {**And all the companions agreed to have Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) as the Khaleefah (the leader to lead the Muslims after the death of the Prophet).** [\[211\]](#), [\[212\]](#), [\[213\]](#)

How can any Muslim said to have been a *Wali* (intimate friend) of Allah, as some of the Ahmadiyya have boasted of Nanak, undermine the position of their Prophet, who was chosen precisely because he had the purest of hearts, as just another individual among thousands of others? Only a disbeliever or, worse still, a hypocrite (*munafiq*) would harbour such thoughts let alone contemptuously express them in public.

Kohli then cites Nanak, albeit from the SGGS, as going so far as to redefine the true meaning and intent of the five daily prayers:

For a Muslim, the prayer (Namaz) is the foundation of practical religion. He is required to pray at least five times a day. Baba Farid has also laid great emphasis on Prayer in his Sloks in the *Adi Granth*. According to him, the head, which does not bow in prayer, must be cut down. [\[214\]](#) About five prayers, the Guru has this to say:

“Five prayers, five times, five their names; Truth is the FIRST, rightful earning the SECOND, God's Grace for all the THIRD, Sincere mind the FOURTH and the Praises of the Lord the FIFTH, Let practice be the repetition of the Kalimah in order to be called a Muslim.” [\[215\]](#)

The *Kalimah* (word) is recited by a Muslim as the basic foundation of practice, **but the Guru wants the practice of the five virtuous prayers for a True Muslim as his *Kalimah***. For God's realization, such a discipline is necessary. [\[216\]](#), [\[217\]](#) (bold ours)

And finally, this entire approach is clearly discernible in an exchange found in the *Puratan JS* between Nanak and Mian Mitha:

Shekh Mitha said: “Sir, what is that Kur'an, by reading which one may become approved of? [A]nd what is that book, by acting up to which one may become accepted? [A]nd what is that Darvesh-ship, by which one may become worthy of the gate (of God)? [A]nd what is that fasting, by which the heart remains fixed and does not move? [A]nd what is that prayer, by the performing of which a favourable glance (of God) falls (on one)?

The Baba answered and said: “Mardana, play the rebeck!” Mardana, did so, and the Baba made the Sabd in the Rag Maru, Mahala 1. [there follow fifteen verses]. [\[218\]](#)

These verses read as follows:

For such devotees are accepted at His door.

(1). Make truth, your prayer, and faith, your carpet for praying on; Subdue your desires, and give up your Asa; Look on the body as your mosque, and the mind as your priest; And take for your creed that God is pure and holy;

- (2). Do good, and make it your shara and shariat; Look on giving up the world and searching for God, as the true road (tarikati); O Abdul! look on conquering your heart as true knowledge, (marifat); Then you will obtain the truth (hakikat), and you will never again die.
- (3). Look upon the study of God with your heart as your Kuran and other books; And keep the ten (female) organs from wickedness; Control the five male (passions) by faith. Then your alms and patience will be accepted.
- (4). Let love to mankind be your Makka, and let your fasting be the humbling yourself in the dust; Let Heaven be your spiritual guide, and act according to its commands; Look on the service of God as your Huris, light, and perfumes, and make the pure God, your place (of shelter).
- (5). Regard obtaining the truth as your judge, (Kaji [Qazi]) and purifying your heart as your pilgrim, (Haji); Make leaving off evil deeds your priest (Mulla), and the praising of God your devotee (darvesh.)
- (6). [] Make your rosary of remembrance, the subduing of the ten female (organs); Make humility your traditions (sunnat); this is your chief duty. ...
- (8). Let your first (or morning) prayer be His praise; your second, patience; Your third, humility; your fourth, alms; Your fifth, keeping the five (male organs) in one place; These will be all sufficient for you at the five times (of prayer.)
- (9). Make, regarding God as all in all, your religious duty (madipha or wazifa); And make the forsaking of your evil nature, the water pot for ablution (kuga) of your hands; Know that God is one, and make this your call to prayer ...
- (10). ... Remove from yourself your impurities, and be pure, and regard this as your Hadis; And make belief in the unchangeable Form, the turban (dastar) for your head. [\[219\]](#)

Hence, it is apparent from the above examples that Nanak intended on redefining those aspects of Islamic orthopraxy that he saw as clashing with his wholly unIslamic religious views. It is inconceivable to think that any true Muslim would consistently repeat such a message, let alone go so far as to undermine God's divine commandments and His revealed Word.

THE 'HINDU' NANAK

Guru Nanak ji said: "O Mardana, it is a fair distance away and [besides] they do not allow **Hindus** to enter therein." – *Bala Janamsakhi*

Further evidence of inconsistencies and discrepancies in the *janam sakhis* can also be presented from a variety of angles.

Compare, for example, the number of occasions where Nanak is called a "Hindu" as opposed to a "Muslim". We have already seen how he responded to rumours of him having converted to Islam – he emphatically and unhesitatingly rejected them as untrue. Yet, Nanak put up no such objections when called a Hindu. To the contrary, there is plenty of evidence to show that he was either indifferent to or, worse still, tacitly approved of being labelled as such. We have already cited the story related by Pincott wherein a Muslim identifies Nanak as the Hindu who would not only break up the faith of Islam, but also succeed in conquering Paradise (*Jannah*), thus causing Muslims to lose confidence in their Prophet's teaching. This admission, however, pales in significance to the one uttered by Nanak and acknowledged by his 'Muslim' bard, Mardana. Related in the *Bala JS*, the dialogue runs as follows:

[Mardana said] “Guru ji, Muslims [Turks/ Mughals] praise Mecca abundantly, so show me it, may goodness be with you.” Guru Nanak ji said: “O Mardana, it is a fair distance away and [besides] they do not allow **Hindus** to enter therein.” Mardana responded: “It cannot be far for you. For me it is but a mere blink of an eye.” Guru Nanak said: “Mardana from here it is two and half thousand miles (*jojan koho* – an old measuring unit of distance),” to which Mardana replied: “Then it is two and a half blinks for me! And you say **Hindus** are forbidden, yet who could forbid you?” Guru Nanak said: “May good be upon you Mardana for I cannot deny what you have said.” [\[220\]](#) (bold ours)

This is a devastating revelation which ought to serve as a death nell to the incessant arguments of the Ahmadiyya. Not only does the very same source they blindly rely on have Nanak referring to himself as a Hindu, but also has Mardana repeating and, thus, agreeing with his Guru’s self-identification.

Bala again records how Nanak is designated a Hindu during his chaperoning of Mardana to Mecca. Sidhu cites:

A Haji named Shah Sharaf questioned the Guru about his dress and said, “**Being a Hindu why are you dressed as a Fakir?**” The Guru replied, “Hear me sir, asking a fakir about his dress is insulting. **Men of God care little for dress or worldly traditions**”. (Lines 23-24 page 98) Again the Hajis ask, “Why should a **Hindu Fakir** visit Mecca? Do you know there is a place on the way where **Hindus** are slaughtered? **Even the Muslims who escort Hindus to Mecca are molested.**” The Baba said, “Dear Mardana let these Hajis go. Do not accompany them. If you must visit Mecca, I will arrange for you differently.” (Line 13-18 Page 102) [\[221\]](#) (bold, underline ours)

We can also do away with Abdul Jaleel’s contention that “Baba Nanak, while on pilgrimage, dressed like a pilgrim, carried with him a stick, Quran, a prayer mat and a water jug for performing ablution”. [\[222\]](#) Actually, the *Bala JS* account has it that Nanak carried a “book” under his arm, not a Qur’an:

Baba Nanak approached Mecca donned in blue attire like the pilgrim. He carried a staff in one hand and a rosary in the other, a prayer mat above his head, and a book under his arm (*bagal vich kitab rakhee haee*). [\[223\]](#)

This is corroborated in an earlier source too, namely the *vars* of Gurdas, in which he records:

baabaa fir maakae gayaa neel basathr dhhaarae banavaaree//
aasaa haathh kithaab kaashh koojaa baa(n)g musaalaa dhhaaree//
Donning blue attire then Baba Nanak went to Mecca.
He held staff in his hand, pressed a book under his armpit, caught hold of a metal pot and mattress. [\[224\]](#)

Although the above lends absolutely no weight to the claims of the Ahmadiyya, it does not stop Qadiani, Giani Ibadullah, from citing it as proof before going on to argue:

Instead of giving our own comment on the “book” possessed by Guru Ji on that journey we would quote the explanation of a famous Sikh scholar Sardar G. B. Singh Ji retired post Master General. He writes:-

“Bhai Guru Das has said that the Book under the arm pit can be understood as the Holy Quran (*Hamail*) of small size in fine print. The Muslims usually hang it on the arm after wrapping it in a satchel [sic], due [to] its light weight.” (Parachin Bateran 20) [225]

Ibadullah’s unwillingness to comment and, hence, his resortment to G.B. Singh speaks volumes since it probably has something to do with the fact that Bhai Gurdas said absolutely nothing of the sort, anywhere – neither in his *Vars* nor in his *Kabitt Sawaiyye*.

More significantly, curiosity over the identity of this book even got the better of the Hajj pilgrims Nanak presumably travelled with while accompanying Mardana to Mecca. Kirpal relates that these *Hajis* “questioned him saying that **he should reveal the book he used to carry under his arm. They wanted to know whether it was the Quran or some other text.** They also desired to know whether Hindus or Muslims were good. In response, the Guru sa[id] that both Hindus and Muslims would suffer without the noble deeds such as righteousness, truth, etc. The Guru implied that those who do good are good people. [226] Listening to this, the Hajis remained silent”. [227], [228] (bold ours) The exact words are:

The Muslim Scholars said, “Open the book you carry and read out your views to prove whether the Hindus are superior or the Muslims.” Guru Nanak’s reply: “The Baba replied to the Hajis they both suffer because they lack meritorious acts.” [229]

Notice though that Nanak did not answer the query, but managed to adroitly sidestep the issue altogether.

There is then the possibility that the Ahmadiyya may have equivocated over the Punjabi word *kitab* used in reference to this mysterious book and taken it to mean the Qur’an. Though it is true that both the Arabic words *Kitab* and Qur’an can and have been used synonymously within Islam, there is no evidence in this particular context to restrict its meaning in such a way; for all we know, this book, as some scholars have suggested, could have been a proto-copy of his hymns that were later incorporated in the SGGS.

It is also likely that the Ahmadiyya ended up suffering from confirmation bias. In their pursuit for information that might conform to their preconceived views, the group may have been motivated to interpret evidence in a biased way, in this case the meaning of the word *kitab*, with the goal of supporting their aforementioned contention of an extant copy of the Qur’an falsely attributed to Nanak.

But what of the obvious disparity that plagues such an argument? While on the one hand, we have Nanak being depicted as a practicing Muslim who had donned the attire of a pilgrim and set off for Hajj carrying a prayer mat, an ablution jug, and rosary beads; on the other, he was constantly being called a disbelieving Hindu polytheist!

To put it plainly, it is inconceivable to think that any reasonable Muslim would consider a man dressed to the hilt as a practicing co-religionist and travelling for pilgrimage – one of the five sacred pillars of Islam – to be anything other than a Muslim, let alone publicly labelling him with a term that represents the worst possible crime against God’s divine sovereignty: polytheism. The issue of declaring someone a disbeliever is as serious as it can get *vis-à-vis* the inviolable rights afforded by God in protecting a Muslim’s dignity and honour. As such, Muslims are, in general, incredibly careful and sensitive in this regard given the ominous

consequences of wrongly identifying a fellow faithful as a *kaafir* (disbeliever). Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) warned in no uncertain terms:

Any person who calls his brother "O disbeliever", then it (the truth of this label) will (inevitably) return to (at least) one of them. If it is true, (then it is) as he asserted. (But if it is not) then it returns to him (i.e. the charge of disbelief returns back to the one who originally made it). (Sahih Muslim)

Hence, whatever the reasons, it is not unreasonable to assume that these must have been of a conspicuously unIslamic nature to theologically warrant labelling Nanak as, of all things, a polytheist. And although there may exist a seemingly insurmountable disparity between Nanak's alleged Muslim appearance and the multiple historical accounts of Muslim witnesses, some of whom were considered learned individuals, all independently verifying at different times and locales his Hindu identity, there is a credible solution. The answer lies with Nanak's unusually peculiar dress sense as depicted so vividly in the *Puratan JS*. It is reported in this *janam sakhi* that when he "passed his retired life in the east":

The attire of the Baba was one mango-coloured raiment, and one white raiment; on his feet he had one pair of shoes and one pair of slippers. Over his neck a shirt, [230] on his head a Kalandar's hat, a necklace of bones, on his forehead a Tilak (mark) of saffron. [231]

Similarly, during "the second time [of his] retired life in the *Dakhan (south)* ... on his feet he had sandals of wood, in his hand a staff, on his head rolls of rope; on his forehead as Tilak the paint of a point". [232] Likewise, when he "began to pass his third retired life in the northern region ... [o]n his feet he had a skin and on his head also, his whole body was wrapped up. On his forehead he had a Tilak of saffron". [233] And finally, we are informed of his fourth retired life in the west and his journey across the Middle East to the city of Mecca:

On his feet he had shoes of leather and trousers of leather; on his neck he had a necklace of bones, **on his forehead a Tilak of a dot**, his clothes were blue. He played amongst children; (thus) playing he went on a Hajj. The Haji asked him and said: "O Darvesh, thou hast no cup, no staff, no skin, no sack, art thou a Hindu or a Musalman?" The Baba recited a Sabd, in the Rag Tilang, Mahala I. [there follow four verses]. [234] (bold ours)

Little wonder, therefore, that despite his adoption of the emblematic clothing of the fakirs, the distinctly Hindu-oriented saffron mark on Nanak's forehead, as well as his necklace of bones, either culminated in him swiftly being identified as a Hindu, or led to confusion and uncertainty over his religious origin.

As for him being identified as a Hindu, then as quoted earlier from the *Bala JS*, not only was Nanak questioned by Shah Sharaf about his dress as follows: "Being a Hindu why are you dressed as a Fakir?", but was also appropriately dubbed a "Hindu Fakir" by other Hajj pilgrims. [235]

Further supporting evidence can be gleaned from other hagiographies too. Kirpal cites a discussion between the Sufi Shaikhs Ibrahim and his disciple Kamal following the latter's encounter with Nanak and Mardana in the jungle. The story goes that after returning to "his teacher to tell him that a faqir has arrived who is accompanied by a rebeck-player and that the faqir sings his own verse. He also told that he had remembered the above couplet", [236] Ibrahim "asked Kamal if that faqir was a Hindu or Muslim. **Kamal replied that he was a**

Hindu. He was highly astonished that a Hindu faqir could be so committed to the unity of God” (bold ours). [\[237\]](#)

In the *Puratan JS*, a Haji travelling with Nanak rebukes him by stating that “no hindu has ever gone to Mecca. Don’t walk with me; either walk in front or behind me”, to which Nanak responds: “It would be good if you carry on in front.” [\[238\]](#)

Even Pincott, whom the Ahmadiyya have purposefully misrepresented as supporting their overall contention, relates a story that says the same thing:

It must be borne in mind that Nanak never openly seceded from the pale of Hinduism, or ever contemplated doing so. Thus in the Sakhi of Miyan Mitha it is related that towards the end of Nanak’s life a Muslim named Shah ‘Abdu’r-Rahman acknowledged the great advantages he had derived from the teacher of Nanak, and sent his friend Miyan Mitha to the Guru so that he might derive similar benefit. “The Miyan Mitha said, ‘What is his name? Is he a Hindu, or is he a Musalman?’ Shah ‘Abdu’r-Rahman replied, ‘**He is a Hindu and his name is Nanak**’ – (*Sikhan de Raj di Vithi’a* p. 258.) [\[239\]](#) (bold ours)

As for the confusion and uncertainty over his religious identity created by his attire, then this is typified by a story recounted from Miharban’s *janam sakhi* by Kirpal where Nanak is met by “some *sadhus*” in Hinglaj:

Here some *sadhus* met the Guru. They saw him **attired like a Haji** and were astonished at this. **Nobody could make out whether he was an ascetic or a Bairagi, Vaishnava or Udasi, Hindu or Muslim, Khatri or Brahmin, Vaishya or Sudra.** Some of them came to the Guru and asked: “O Beloved of God! **What is your dress** and what do you eat? Also please let us know about yourself so that we can make out as to what should be your diet and could serve you appropriately.” In reply to it, the Guru uttered the following hymn: [\[240\]](#)

Those adopting the fast of truth, holy pilgrimage, of content and bath of illumination and meditation; Making compassion their deity, forgiveness their rosary, Are pre-eminent among men.

To make union with the lord the dhoti; absorption in God the ritually pure kitchen, Love the food consumed-Saith Nanak: Rare are such as thus are blessed.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1245

When the *sadhus* listened to these words of the Guru, they fell at his feet. [\[241\]](#)

This, of course, begs the question of how Hindu *sadhus* could have possibly fallen at Nanak’s feet if he truly was a Muslim. It is patently clear that the only sensible reason for this act of homage was because Nanak’s attire presented him as someone altogether separate and distinct from, at the very least, Islam and Muslims.

DODGING THE BULLET

There are then a number of incidents where Nanak is guilty of employing evasive tactics – similar to the one noted above *vis-à-vis* the book he carried to Mecca – as a means of skirting around any direct inquiries into his religious allegiances. The first is cited by Kirpal which mentions the moment when Nanak is interrogated by the group of Hajj pilgrims he was accompanying:

Many Hajis got together there. **They developed some apprehension** and asked the Guru, “O holy man! Whether you are a Hindu or a Muslim?” The Guru uttered the following hymn: [\[242\]](#)

Lord! Thy fear is my hemp-drug, my mind the leather pouch.
Mad in this intoxication, an anchorite am I become.
With my bowl for Thy sight I beg, that I hunger for.
This ever at Thy door I beg.
For Thy sight I yearn;
At Thy door a beggar-pray dole out this charity to me.
Saffron, flowers, musk and gold by all persons of all castes may be offered.
The merit of sandalwood and God’s devotees is,
To all they impart fragrance.
None considers ghee and silk polluted:
Such is God’s devotee, whatever his caste.
These in devotion to Thy Name bow.
Nanak at the door of such begs aims.
– Guru Granth Sahib. p. 721

When the **Hajis did not get a clear answer as to whether Guru Nanak was a Hindu or a Muslim**, they again questioned him saying that he should reveal the book he used to carry under his arm. [\[243\]](#) (bold, underline ours)

Confusion also transpired in Afghanistan where Nanak acquiesced to the Hindu identity tag by arguing that because everyone originated from the same source, religious labels were, therefore, inconsequential:

Guru Nanak put up outside the city of Kabul towards Sultanpur side. Here some holy men met him and held a discourse with him. They warned him that this was a land of the Muslims and **he being a Hindu must be cautious**. [\[244\]](#) The Guru replied that the same Divine Light pervades all. God has created all beings in the same mould. However, some of them wear *janeu* while some others got themselves circumscribed [sic]. [\[245\]](#) Those holy men were deeply impressed by the Guru’s words. [\[246\]](#)

The same approach and argument was utilised against Pir Abdul Rehman in Iran:

One day Abdul Rehman also met the Guru and asked him what his religion was whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim. The Guru replied that the Name Divine was his religion. At this Abdul Rehman further said that the beloved of God had no religion. The Guru again replied that the beloved of God love God. They do not get involved in the controversies of religion and Hindu and Muslim scriptures. The entire creation of God is essentially the same. Both the rich and the poor, the good and the bad all are His creation. The same Divine Light is resplendent in all. We fail to see this Light because of our egoity. Hearing this, Abdul Rehman fell at the Guru’s feet. [\[247\]](#)

In fact, this exchange is further elaborated by Kirpal below:

Guru Nanak and Mardana settled outside the city and did not go to the shrine of the martyrs as did all the Hajis. **This made the city-dwellers anxious to know to which tradition this faqir belonged**. They came together to the Guru and asked him if he had faith in Allah

(God), Prophet Muhammad and Hazrat Ali. Guru Nanak replied that Hazrat Muhammad was a prophet whose job was to convey the message. He came with a message from God. What is more important is the message he brought and it became all the more important to follow that message. That message exhorted man to worship God. This is the will of God. I also follow this. **The people who had come to meet the Guru failed to understand him.**

They asked him to go to Pir Abdul Rahman, their spiritual mentor. [248] Pir Abdul Rahman was a native of Gurdez and had gone on a pilgrimage to Mashhad. [249] So Guru Nanak, Mardana and those people went to the Pir who told the Guru that all the people here are Shias and that they had faith in Hazrat Ali. **He wanted to know whether he was a Shia or Sunni.** Guru Nanak replied that the Divine Light shines in all. **All the prophets are EQUAL TO HIM.** He further told that the same Divine Light pervaded in them and in the entire universe. However, we fail to perceive it because of the predominance of evil and passion. If one eradicates one's ego, it can become visible. Abdul Rahman and natives of Mashhad were deeply impressed by the Guru's words. [250] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

While Ubare Khan is told that being a Hindu or Muslim was irrelevant!

Ubare Khan met the Guru and asked him whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim. In reply the Guru told him that only God is eternal; neither Hindus nor Muslims are so. Therefore, they should focus their mind on God. The question of being a Hindu or a Muslim was irrelevant. Ubare Khan was pleased with this answer. He fell at the Guru's feet and sought his blessing. [251]

But, it simply beggars belief as to why any bona fide Muslim would choose to avoid answering such direct and seemingly honest inquiries for no good reasons at all. After all, it was not as if Nanak's life was under threat – a legitimate Islamic reason – to justify such an approach. Of course, the answer is obvious in light of Nanak's *modus operandi* that there is no Hindu and no Muslim. Otherwise, no proud Muslim in his or her right mind would allow confusion and uncertainty to prevail and persist after being associated to a religion that champions polytheism – a concept considered the worst sin of all in Islam. In the end, this ambiguous approach merely reinforces our overall contention while further weakening the Ahmadiyya's.

Having said that, however, there is a meeting that happened between Nanak and a one Pir Dastgir [252] in the city of Baghdad where the Baba musters the courage to directly answer this all-important question. The episode is recorded in *Gyan-Ratanavali*, a *janam sakhi* attributed to Mani Singh and related by Kirpal below:

As they reached near, Pir Dastgir instantly asked Guru Nanak who he was and to **which tradition of Islam he belonged**. The Guru replied that he was God's man and **belonged to NONE of the Islamic traditions. The Pir said in that case he was an infidel and they would kill him by stoning.** [253] On hearing this the Guru gave a loud call of *Sati Kartar* [Lord-Creator is True]. [254] This astonished the Pir Dastgir and other people. They thought this faqir who sang melodies might be crazy. [255]

Whatever the historical truth of this encounter, what cannot be disputed is the sheer weight of evidence we have evaluated in this section that points to the indisputable fact that Nanak was neither identified as, nor called himself or allowed anyone in his presence to label him a Muslim.

As for the issue of ablution, then not only is it an illogical leap in reasoning, given the absence of clear evidence, to infer that Nanak's performance of it must have been Islamic in nature, but such an argument simply cannot be reconciled with him consistently being identified by Hajis and, of all category of people, Sheikhs as a Hindu.

NANAK'S MARRIAGE

Before tackling the legendary account of Nanak's death narrative, it would be appropriate, at this stage, to tackle Ahmad's earlier cited assertion that his Muslim brother (in the Qadiani sense, of course), Baba Nanak, "married into a Muslim family". [256] Now, there are a number of arguments the Ahmadiyya have advanced for this; but, they are so weak to the extent that they can all be rebutted in one fell swoop by again referencing the *Bala JS*:

At night the marriage company (of the Vedis) rose and entered (the village) with fine music, inside much honour was shown (to them). When one watch and a quarter of the night had passed, **the (four) circuits (round the marriage fire) took place**. "This, which I am telling, Guru, I have seen with my own eyes, I was present and speak as an eye-witness." Guru Angad having heard some words became happy and began to weep in love. [257] (bold ours)

In this case, we have Bala himself almost swearing under oath before Angad of being an actual eyewitness to Nanak's betrothal which, he says, was solemnised with circuits around the fire *à la* the Hindu marriage ceremony.

There is then the simple issue of whether the names of Nanak's wife and mother-in-law – recorded in *Saakhi* no. 34 of the *Bala JS* as Mata Sulakhni and Chando Rani, respectively [258] – were typically, or for that matter atypically, Muslim in origin.

It is also interesting to highlight the incidental point that while the founder explicitly stated that Nanak married into a Muslim family, thereby implying that his wife was a Muslim before and presumably after the marriage, we have some Qadianis today alleging the opposite. For example, a paper published on the Ahmadiyya website *alislam.org* has the author, Mubasher Ahmad, flatly contradicting his messiah by declaring: "The parents of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, his wife and early disciples were all Hindus, but he did not adhere to Hindu ceremonial devotions." [259] From the above, it appears as though he certainly did adhere to some ceremony that was more Hinduised than anything else!

NANAK'S FICTITIOUS DEATH

There is then the curious case of Nanak's death and Ahmad's palpably fictitious take on this incident as divulged by Barkatullah below:

Hazrat Ahmad, very clearly pointed out in his book, *Sut Bachan*, that the incident of saying funeral prayers over half of the sheet without Baba Nanak's body was untrue. Muslims do not say funeral prayers for a body that is not there. ... Hazrat Ahmad contends that as Baba Nanak was a Muslim, his body was taken away secretly by his Muslim followers, and after saying funeral prayers it was buried in a safe place. (*Sut Bachan*, p. 237). [260]

Paradoxically, what Ahmed rejects as untrue has evidence for it, albeit disputed by the scholars, while what he accepts as fact has absolutely none and is, hence, a gross figment of his imagination. What is more, the contention that "Muslims do not say funeral prayers for a

body that is not there” might be true in the cult of the Ahmadiyya, but is patently false in Islam. The strongest and most correct opinion is that Muslims *can* pray the funeral prayer in absentia of a body. This is proven in the most authentic books of hadith – the *Saheehayn*, i.e. Bukhari and Muslim [261] – where the Prophet (Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) offered the funeral prayers with his companions in absentia of the Abyssinian King, Negus, after news reached them of his death.

It is true that whatever historical evidence we have of Nanak’s final moments are heavily disputed by academics and for good reason too. Take, for instance, the earliest account recorded in the *Puratan JS* as quoted by Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair:

Just before Nanak’s death, a quarrel arose between his Hindu and Muslim followers over the disposal of his corpse. The Hindus wished to burn it, the Muslims to bury it. Nanak was asked to decide. He said ‘let the Hindus place flowers on my right and Muslims on my left. They whose flowers are found fresh tomorrow morning may have the disposal of the body.’ After the flowers had been set on each side of him, the Guru drew his sheet over the flowers as well as himself. When the sheet was removed the following day, both sets of flowers were still fresh but the body had disappeared. [262]

McLeod adds that “[t]hose who had gathered around him prostrated themselves, and when the sheet was removed they found that there was nothing under it. The flowers on both sides remained fresh, and both Hindus and Muslims took their respective shares. All who were gathered there prostrated themselves again”. [263]

If, for arguments sake, the above were true, then what is beyond doubt is that the “Muslims” who prostrated in homage to Nanak, for whatever reason, were entirely ignorant of the very basics of Islam. Instead, it is likely that this group may have either been followers or sympathetic to the Bhakti movement and, thus, felt an affinity towards Nanak and his teachings.

It might also be the case, as Pincott points out, that this story was meant to confirm Nanak’s religious neutrality towards both Islam and Hinduism:

The mixture of Hinduism and Muhammadanism is evident in this tradition. It is obviously intended to summarize the life of Nanak and the object of his teaching. He is not represented as an outcaste and a failure; on the other hand, his purposes are held to have been fully accomplished. The great triumph was the establishment of a common basis of religious truth for both Muslim and Hindu; and this he is shown to have accomplished with such dexterity that **at his death no one could say whether he was more inclined to Hinduism or to Islam. His friends stood around him at the last moment quite uncertain as to whether they should dispose of his remains as those of a Muslim, or as those of a Hindu.** And Nanak is represented as taking care that the matter should ever remain a moot point; The final miraculous disappearance of the corpse is obviously intended to convey the idea that **Nanak belonged specially neither to one party nor to the other**; while the green and flourishing appearance of the flowers of both parties conveys the lesson that it was his wish that both should live together in harmony and union. The narrator of the life clearly wishes his history to substantiate the prophetic statement recorded at the commencement of his book (*I.O. MS.* 1728, fol. 7) that, at Nanak’s birth, “The Hindus’ said, “The manifestation of some God (*Devata*) has been produced’;” and the Musalmans said, ‘Some holy man (*sadiq*) of God (*Khuda*) has been born.” [264] (bold, underline ours)

Some Sikh academics like Kirpal dismiss the factuality of this story on the simple basis, as Trumpp cites, that “[t]he family and attendants of Guru Baba Nanak set fire to the funeral pile and performed the funeral ceremonies, (saying): ‘The Guru Baba Nanak is bodily gone to Paradise!’”. [265] Kirpal reasons:

The Guru’s family including his wife and two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das, were then present at Kartarpur. The right to perform the last rites conventionally lies with one’s family. So any quarrel as recorded in some Janamsakhis; between the Hindus and the Muslims, on this count does not seem likely. [266], [267]

But there is another much stronger reason for doubting its credibility and that revolves around the supposed miraculous transmutation of Nanak’s body into flower petals. This mythical tale is, in actual fact, almost identical to one attributed to Nanak’s predecessor, Kabir. As Mahinder Gulati puts it:

Both Guru Nanak and Kabir thought on the same lines, so were their philosophies and teachings. To cap it all, there is almost complete similarity in the manner of their deaths and disposal of their mortal remains [268]

According to Ashraf Mirani, this “story undoubtedly owes much to the tale mentioned in Chapter One of the bier of Ma’ruf Karkhi which was fought over by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and may therefore be of sufi origin”. [269] Roshen Dalal agrees:

According to various *legends*, Kabir died at Magahar near Gorakhpur. It was said that those who died (here would go to hell, and Kabir is believed to have gone there to challenge these superstitions. A story narrates that Hindu and Muslim followers disputed over how to dispose of his remains. His body was covered with a sheet, and when it was lifted, only flowers remained, which were divided between the two groups. Half were buried at Magahar, and the other half cremated at Varanasi. This is probably an apocryphal legend, as there are similar stories about other saints including Guru Nanak. [270]

It is plausible to assume, therefore, that this story is, as Dalal et al [271] candidly call it, a legend, where: “The word ‘legend’ designates, as I [McLeod] understand it, a story which is not true. It may be popularly credited with factual truth, but upon examination it turns out never to have happened”. [272] Since it is extremely likely that no one tended to Nanak’s funeral rites except his immediate family, it is, thus, equally probable that the dispute over the disposal of his body is the stuff of legends and that his body was never taken away secretly by his Muslim followers, as Nanak dreamed up, before being buried in some unknown safe place.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to examine both the century-old arguments of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the subsequent apologetics of his followers to determine whether there was any truth to the bold claim that Guru Nanak, who is almost universally accepted as the founder of Sikhism, was a Muslim. Unlike the Ahmadiyya though, who it was found deliberately restricted their research to a narrow selection of historical sources, our objective was to be as comprehensive in our approach as possible. Thus, in order to acquire a far more nuanced and precise record of Nanak’s life, we turned to a larger selection of hagiographies than the single one opted for by Ahmad.

We also exposed an apparent catch-22 by showing that the very same reasons Ahmad used in justifying his rejection of all non-contemporary Nanakian texts, including the SGGS, as historically unreliable for being open to textual corruption and fictitious interpolations also applied to the *Bala JS*. We achieved this by disproving the vital premise of said argument that the *Bala JS* was the oldest and most authentic extant document when, in fact, it was written sometime **after** both the compilation of the SGGS in 1604CE and other more authoritative hagiographies. Hence, not only would Ahmad by his very own standards have to reject the *Bala JS*, but, more importantly, his followers would have to either reject all evidence cherry picked from it on account of its historical unreliability, or be bold enough to dismiss their founder's nonsensical approach. It would be inconsistent on their part to continually uphold its avowed authenticity while ignoring the *Puratan JS* and the SGGS when the latter two chronologically preceded the former and would, therefore, be, according to Ahmad's measure, more authentic.

In the end, what we found in terms of the Ahmadiyya's academic honesty and objectivity was as disturbing as it was predictable. Their treatment of the historical sources was as diabolically shoddy as one might dare to encounter with clear cases of misrepresentation, cherry-picking, quoting-out-of-context, and plain outright subreption. And though the biggest perpetrator was the very founder himself, it hardly came as much of a surprise given his equally dishonest handling of the Islamic sources. If anything, this only further supported what the Muslims have known of this charlatan from the very beginning – big on claims, but small on proofs.

To start with, Ahmad was distinctly biased in his handling of historical proofs. In the case of those relics attributed to Nanak by members of the Sikh community, he was swift in taking their word at face value and readily accepting these sans any attempt at verifying their validity. Contra Ahmad, our research found that the chola alleged by him to be adorned with Arabic verses, including the Islamic Declaration of Faith, and divinely ordained to Nanak could not be traced directly back to him. Instead, it was found that this relic had gone missing for around 200 years before mysteriously coming into the possession of Baba Kabli Mal.

There is then the question of how individuals as openly Sikh and as academically qualified as the Gurus failed to recognise something as ubiquitous and, thus, as obvious as the *Shahaadatayn* (Duel Declaration of Faith), which stood to entirely undermine their religious faith, let alone verses of the Qur'an that declared all other religions as false. If, on the other hand, any of these Gurus knew of the obvious incriminating nature of this cloak, then it is difficult to understand how someone as hostile to orthodox Islam as Guru Arjan could have awarded this to a fellow Sikh! The entire story makes no sense whatsoever.

As for the Qur'an alleged to have been Nanak's personal copy, then not only is this again uncritically accepted on the word of the Sikh community, but the book identified in the *Bala JS* and carried by Nanak on his tours cannot be shown with any level of certainty to be a *mus-haf* (copy of the Qur'an). Rather there exists evidence in the very *janam sakhi* that proves Nanak rejected the authority of the Qur'an declaring: "In this dark age Nanak starts a pure religion. I do not accept the Vedas or the Quran. I accept only God. (Lines 14-15 page 118)". [273] Moreover, he refused to answer direct questions put to him by Muslims inquiring into the identity of said book.

But what really destroys this absurd argument propounded by the Ahmadiyya for well over a century is the sheer bulk of evidence from both the *Bala JS*, as well as other more authoritative hagiographies, that prove beyond doubt that Nanak:

1. Was neither identified as, nor called himself or allowed anyone in his presence to label him a Muslim.
2. Was identified and called a non-Muslim, i.e. a Hindu, on more than one occasion by Muslims themselves – both scholars, as well as the laity.
3. Dressed in a peculiarly unIslamic fashion including sporting a distinctly Hindu-like *tilak* (dot on the forehead) during, of all occasions, his Hajj journey to Mecca with other Muslim pilgrims.
4. Supported and affirmed beliefs and concepts, including reincarnation and transmigration, that would have put him beyond the pales of Islam had he been a true Muslim.
5. Openly rejected fundamental Islamic doctrines that necessarily qualify the beliefs of a Muslim, including the undisputed authority and position of both the Qur'an and the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). In addition, he dismissed well-known rites, such as Hajj and *Khitan* (circumcision) – the latter he designated a sin remarking: "Muslims undergo circumcision; Hindus make holes in their ears. **Both are sinners because** they find fault with the God-given body and try to improve upon Him." [274] (bold ours)

As it turns out, the very source that Ahmad relied so heavily on, i.e. the *Bala JS*, serves as nothing except emphatic evidence against him. As Sidhu expressed so bluntly to his Qadiani opponent:

The Kalima that you claim to have been uttered by the Guru is **not recorded anywhere by him** although his discussions and discourses with Hindu scholars and Sidh yogis are faithfully recorded in his own pen. You call him truthful. Would a truthful person conceal the very basic concept of his belief? **The Guru nowhere wrote La Allah Illilah Mohammed Rasul Allah.** If you still think that the Guru was a Muslim, would you accept such pretenders as Muslims who conceal their faith? The Guru NEVER stated that he was a Muslim. [275] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

There is then the compelling scholarly side to consider where virtually no non-Sikh academic worth his or her salt considers Nanak to be a Muslim. One ought to ask why? Is it the case that so many intellectuals from different parts of the world and at different times all independently got it wrong by reaching a conclusion contra Ahmad? Or could it be that the Qadianis, collectively driven by a shared belief in the infallibility of their Messiah and a fundamental set of beliefs and agendas, have always been right? The answer ought to be self-evident when carefully considered in light of all the above. Of course, there are always those who will suggest otherwise as Abdul Jaleel attempts when deludingly contending:

It is indeed difficult to explain fully the causes which led to the identification of Sikhism with Hinduism rather than with Islam. But so subtle and variant are generally the causes which shape the religious thought of a people, that a complete satisfactory explanation is often impossible in such matters. [276]

As we have seen, however, a complete and satisfactory explanation is not just possible, but easily accessible for those who honestly and objectively seek the truth. Like us, there are

many others who managed to achieve this end. Take Prof Haq's simple yet persuasive argument below. He argues that it is highly likely that had Nanak been born into a Muslim family, he would certainly have faced severe repercussions for much of the anti-orthodox rhetoric he is known to have spouted as a result. The only reason he was tolerated, Haq argues, is because he was a disbeliever to begin with whose new movement posed little threat to elicit any meaningful response from Muslim orthodoxy. It is worth presenting Haq's argument in full:

But the Muslim orthodoxy usually did not take notice of the movement arising amongst the non-Muslims as long as it did not directly or indirectly aim at disintegrating the Muslim society.

Against this background we can understand the reason of the indifference of the Muslim orthodoxy to the movement initiated by Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak was born of Hindu parents. **At no time did he claim to be a Muslim. His being a Hindu by birth made him an outsider as far as the Muslim orthodoxy was concerned. And this saved him from persecution to which a Muslim would have been subjected, if he had said half of the critical things against Islamic traditions as Guru Nanak did.** Knowing the fate of men like Sayyid Muhammad of Jawnpur and other heterodox Muslims, we can very well imagine what would have happened to Guru Nanak had he been born in a Muslim family.

Sikh literature suggests that Muslims used to meet Guru Nanak and listen to his teachings. On the basis of these meetings one may be led to think that Muslims might have embraced Nanakism, which we would prefer to call Sikhism. **But this inference will appear doubtful to those who know how strong the hold of Muslim orthodoxy was over the Muslim society.** Except in a few cases here and there, we can say with full confidence that Sikhism was expanding at the cost of Hinduism; it did not find converts among Muslims. It was an accepted rule during that period-and it is still so, at least in theory-that a Muslim is not allowed to renounce Islam. **An apostate is to be killed, it is believed. The Muslim orthodoxy was really very strict in the matter of apostasy.** There are evidences that the Muslim orthodoxy actually put to death some of those non-Muslims who were reported to have accepted Islam but were not willing to remain Muslims. Had there been cases of Muslims becoming Sikhs, the Muslim orthodoxy could not have taken it lightly. But the Muslim historians are silent about any such cases where Muslims were executed for renouncing Islam in order to become Sikhs.

The Sikh literature does not definitely say that any Muslim renounced his religion and became a Sikh. It only mentions that the Muslims also used to listen to Guru Nanak, and sometimes they even had religious discourses with him. As a matter of fact, we know only one man, Mardana, who is said to have been born of Muslim parents but had become a devoted disciple of Guru Nanak. [\[277\]](#) (bold ours)

And as argued above, this was the same Mardana accompanied by Nanak on his Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. Haq continues:

When we come to the non-orthodox section of the Muslim society, we do find a response to the personality and the teachings of Guru Nanak. Since this group did not consider itself bound to follow the mandate of the Muslim orthodoxy, **it adopted an independent outlook towards people outside of the Islamic fold.** These were people who paid careful attention to what Guru Nanak was saying, and then transmitted his teachings to their own brethren. One

of the best representatives of this trend among the Muslims was Muhsin Fani. In his famous book, in Persian, on comparative religion, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, he not only paid a tribute to the personality of Guru Nanak but also attempted to interpret his teachings in the light of the Sikh practices of his time.

Guru Nanak, to Muhsin, was a man of great piety. ... Muhsin regarded Guru Nanak as one who was trying to bridge the 'religious' gap between the two principal communities of India. ...

In defence of the Sikhs it can be said that Muhsin Fani being an outsider could not very well comprehend the Sikh philosophy of Guruship. [278]

So it appears that, in spite of the indifferent attitude of the Muslim orthodoxy towards Guru Nana, the Muslim community at large did take great interest in him. It was because of this attitude of the Muslims that till recently one very often used to hear, in the Punjab, the Muslims singing:

Baba Nanak Shah Faqir [Baba Nanak Shah, the Mendicant] Sikhan da Guru, Musalmana da Pir [Guru of the Sikhs and Pir of the Muslims]. [279] (bold ours)

In conclusion then, the arguments that we have presented in this paper and the evidence on which they rest should lead the unbiased and critically minded to the undisputed conclusion that Nanak was anything but a Muslim.

As for the Ahmadiyya in particular, then they are confronted by damning evidence that not only demolishes all the arguments of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in this regard, but more significantly exposes his biggest lie of all – his claim to Prophethood.

Subhanakallaahuma wa bi hamdika, ash-Shahaadu al-Laa ilaaha illa Ant, astaghfiruka wa atoobu ilayka.

APPENDIX A – RUMI’S ASCENT OF MAN AND TRANSMIGRATION

Rizvi is not the only one to have made this connection between Rumi and his alleged belief in the Hindu doctrine of transmigration. However, Hanif disagrees and refers to Chishti Sufi sheikh, Simnani (d. 1405CE), for evidence:

Saiyid Muhammad Asraf Jahangir Simnani makes an interesting commentary on the following lines contained in the *Masnawi* of Jalalu’d-Din Rumi:

I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was a Man,
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as Man, to soar
With angels blest; but even from angelhood
When I have sacrificed my angel-soul,
I shall become what to mind e’er conceived.
Oh, let me not exist! for non-existence.
Proclaims in organ tones: “To Him we shall return.”

Simnani saw the death of self in terms of a spiritual ascent towards the Divine and maintained that it demanded complete severance from involvement in earthly existence. **The verses did NOT, however, advocate transmigration**, which Sinmani added, was a different thing altogether. [280] (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

In Hanif's assessment of the Sufis residing in the region of South Asia, only two have been identified in his encyclopedia as clearly expressing their belief in said doctrine: Ghulam Jilani Rohtaki (d. 1819CE) and Saiyid Karam Ali (circa 1700s).

[1] Abu Hurairah narrated that Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The Hour will not arrive until almost thirty Dajjal Liars are sent; each one of them will claim that he is the Messenger of Allah." (*Bukhari*, 13/81; *Muslim*, 7202)

Hudhaifah narrated that the Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "In my nation there are 27 Dajjal Liars (*kathaaboon daajjaaloon*); among them, four are women. **And indeed, I am the seal of Prophets. There is no Prophet after me.**" (*Ahmad*, 5/396; at-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir*, 3026; and *Al-Ausat*, 5582; and in *As-Sahihah*, al-Albani declared it authentic, 1999).

Jabir narrated that he heard the Prophet say: "Indeed, before the Hour arrives there will be 30 Liars (*kathaabeen*). Among them is the one from Yamamah, the one Al-'Ansi from San'a, and the one from Himyar. And one of them is the Dajjal, who is the greatest of them in terms of *Fitnah* (i.e., in terms of the trials and tribulations that he will come with)." (*Ahmad*, 3/345; *Ibn Hibban*, 6650; *Al-Bazzar*, 3375; *al-Ihsan*, 15/26; al-Arnaut said that its chain is strong)

Thauban narrated that the Messenger of Allah (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The Hour will not come to pass until tribes from my nation will go and join polytheists, and until they worship idols. And indeed, there will be among my nation thirty Liars (*kathaaboon*): each one of them will claim that he is a Prophet, **though I am the seal of the Prophets – there is no Prophet after me.**" (*At-Tirmidhi*, 2219, who said, "Hasan Sahih." Al-Albani declared it to be authentic in *Sahih Sunan at-Tirmidhi*, 2/244)

– M. bin Bayyumi (2004), *Smaller Signs of the Day*, (Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, Riyadh), pp. 34-5, 108.

[2] Fn. 19: Sat Bachan: pg. 29.

[3] Fn. 20: Nazool ul Masih: pp. 203/204.

[4] Fn. 21: Ibid: pp. 204/205.

[5] Fn. 22: Khan, Muhammed Zafarullah: Ahmadiyyat. The Renaissance of Islam: pg. 79.

[6] Fn. 23: Ibid.

[7] Fn. 24: Dictionary of Islam: pp. 583/595.

[8] N.O. Memon (1989), [*Ahmadiyyat or Qadianism! Islam or Apostasy?*](#), (Islam International Publications Ltd, Islamabad), pp. 195-6.

[9] [*Baba Nanak*](#), (Ahmadiyya Muslim Community; accessed: Mar 14, 2014).

[10] A. Jaleel (1993), [*Birth of Sikhism*](#), (The Review of Religions, March; accessed from Ahmadiyya Muslim Community: Mar 14, 2014).

[11] G.S. Mann (1996), *The Goindval Pothis: The Earliest Extant Sources of the Sikh Canon*, (Harvard University Press, USA), p. 14.

[12] W.H. McLeod (1980), *Early Sikh Tradition – A Study of the Janam-sakhis*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford), p. 8.

- [13] K Singh (1994), [*Impact of Colebrooke's Janamsakhi MS. on History of the Sikhs*](#), (Asiatic Society, Calcutta).
- [14] *Ibid.*
- [15] J.S. Tiwana, [*Birth of Guru Nanak, Katik or Baisakh*](#), (Maritime Sikh Society; accessed: Mar 15, 2014).
- [16] K. Singh (2004), *Janamsakhi Tradition – An Analytical Study*, (Singh Brothers, Amritsar), pp. 37-8.
- [17] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*, pp. 24-5.
- [18] J.S. Tiwana, *op. cit.*
- [19] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
- [20] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 22.
- [21] (Ed) P. Singh, L.E. Fenech (2014), *The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies*, (Oxford University Press), p. 185.
- [22] Fn. 20: The earliest known manuscripts include the Puratan Janam Sakhi (1640); the Bala Janam Sakhi (1658); and the Miharban Janam Sakhi (1754). As for the dates of these texts' composition, I base them on the following evidence. The text of the writing of the Gurus that appear in the early Puratan manuscripts is pre-Kartarpur Pothis (1604).

We have on record the claim of Hariji (d. 1696) that his father, Miharban, had completed his Janam Sakhi by 1619; see *Sodhi Hariji Krit Goshatan Miharban kian*, ed. Krishna Kumari Bansal (Sangrur: the editor, 1977), 234; for reference to a copy of Miharban Janam Sakhi prepared in 1651, see MS 427B, Khalsa College (*Samat 1708 Vaisakh Vadi ekam nu* [Miharban, Hariji, and] *Chatrbhuj pothi puran hoi*, folio 676). There is firm evidence that Bala Janam Sakhi was compiled after the death of Baba Handal (1648), and an elaborately illustrated manuscript dated 1658 was extant until recently, see Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala, 149-150.

[23] Fn. 22: The Miharban and the Bala Janam Sakhis were productions of the sectarian groups led by Miharban and Baba Handal, respectively. For Janam Sakhi of Miharban, see MS 2306, Khalsa College, dated 1650 (*Sakhi Guru Hariji ke mukh ki likhi Samat 1707*, folio 164b); and *Sodhi Hariji Krit Goshatan Miharban kian*. For additional writings of this family, see Pritam Singh and Joginder Singh Ahluwalia, *Sikhan da Chhota Mel: Itihas te Sarvekhanh* (San Leandro, California: Punjab Educational and Cultural Foundation, 2009), 84-97. An undated manuscript entitled, Janam Sakhi Baba Handal (folios 1-602), is available with his descendents [sic] at Jandiala Guru, near Amritsar. For more on this text and family, see Varinder Kaur, "*Parchi Baba Handal: Sampadan te Itihasik Visleshanh*," M. Phil. thesis (Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1989); and Rajinder Pal, *Sankhep Jivan Charitar Sri Guru Baba Handal Ji* (Jandiala: Gurudwara Sri Guru Baba Handal Ji, undated [1990s]).

[24] G.S. Mann (2010), [*Guru Nanak's Life and Legacy: An Appraisal*](#), (Journal of Punjab Studies, Spring – Fall, Volume 17, No. 1-2, accessed: Mar 16, 2014), p. 7.

[25] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*, p. 16.

[26] H.R. Gupta (2008), *History of the Sikhs 1469-1708, Vol. 1*, (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi), pp. 39, 42.

[27] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*

[28] Fn. 1: *Bala JS*, p. 1.

[29] Fn. 1: *Bala JS*, pp. 1-7.

[30] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*, pp. 16-7.

[31] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[32] Fn. 2: The actual manuscript is in the possession of Shri P. N. Kapoor of Hauz Qazi, Delhi. A photocopy is held by the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala. An abbreviated text is given in Kirpal Singh, *Janam Sakhi Parampara*

- (Patiala, 1969), Appendix, pp. 221-329. See also Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Dasam Granth da pauranik adhiain* (Jalandhar, 1965), p. 59.
- [33] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*, p. 19.
- [34] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- [35] H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
- [36] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*, p. 176.
- [37] H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*
- [38] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*, pp. 175-6.
- [39] Fn. 18: Earnest Trump, *The Adi Granth*, London, 1877. Preface p.(v).
- [40] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
- [41] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*, p. 17.
- [42] W.H. McLeod (1968), *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, (Oxford), p. 22.
- [43] Fn. 10: M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, IXXXVII Vol. I, 2000 (Reprint).
- [44] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-5.
- [45] (Eds) D. Jones, M. Marion (2014), *The Dynamics of Cultural Counterpoint in Asian Studies*, (State University of New York Press, Albany), p. 97.
- [46] (Eds) R.M. Feener, T. Sevea (2009), *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore), p. 140.
- [47] (Ed) C. Caldarola (1982), *Religion and Societies: Asia and the Middle East*, (Walter de Gruyter), p. 277.
- [48] Ghulam Ahmad mentions this incident and his regret at the loss of Lekh Ram's life in the following publication: [The Essence of Volume III](#), (Islam International Publications Limited, 2005; accessed: Mar 31, 2014), p. 403.
- [49] (Eds) D. Jones, M. Marion, *op. cit.*
- [50] (Eds) R.M. Feener, T. Sevea, *op. cit.*
- [51] (Eds) H.K. Puri, P.S. Judge (2000), *Social and Political Movements: Readings on Punjab*, (Rawat Publications, New Delhi), p. 140.
- [52] M.G. Ahmad (2007), *A Message of Peace*, (Islam International Publications Ltd, UK), pp. 13-4.
- [53] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- [54] S.A. Malik (1993), [Sikhism – Some Distinctive Beliefs](#), (The Review of Religions, Nov; accessed from Ahmadiyya Muslim Community: Mar 31, 2014).
- [55] A. Jaleel, *op. cit.*
- [56] (Ed) H. Singh (1975), *Perspectives on Guru Nanak*, (Punjabi University, Patiala), p. 99.
- [57] *Ibid.*, pp. 200-1.
- [58] R. Thapar (2004), *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*, (University of California Press), p. 488.
- [59] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
- [60] (Eds) G.H. Adel, M.J. Elmi, H. Taromi-Rad (2012), *Sufism: An Entry from Encyclopaedia of the World of Islam*, (EWI Press Ltd., UK), pp. 79-80.
- [61] T.P. Hughes (1885), *A Dictionary of Islam*, (W.H. Allen and Co.), p. 584.
- [62] I.M. Lapidus (2002), *A History of Islamic Societies*, (Cambridge University Press, USA), p. 366.
- [63] B.A. Faruqi (1940), *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid – Study of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindis Doctrine of Unity*, (Ripon Printing Press, Lahore), pp. 80-1.
- [64] R. Thapar, *op. cit.*, p. 488.
- [65] *Ibid.*
- [66] (Ed) W. Singh (1990), *Sikhism and Punjab's Heritage*, (Publication University, Patiala), p. 158.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[68] I.M. Lapidus, *op. cit.*

[69] Fn. 3: A Sufi order named after the famous Persian mystic Abu'l Mughith al-Husain bin Mansur al-Hallaj (244-309 A.H./858-922 A.D.). The doctrines of the Hallajiya order may be thus summarised:

1. in *Fiqh*, the five *fara'id*, even the Hajj may be replaced by other works (*isqat-a 'l-wasa'it*).
2. in *Kalam*, God's transcendence (*tanzih*) above the limits of creation (*tul, ard*), the existence of an uncreated Divine spirit (*Ruh-i-Natiqah*), which becomes united with the created *Ruh* (spirit) of the ascetic (*hulul-a 'l-lahut-fi 'l-nasut*); the saint becomes the living and personal witness of God, whence the saying: *An 'l-Haqq* "I am creative Truth".
3. in *Tasawwuf*, perfect union with the divine will through desire of and submission to suffering.

[70] Fn. 4: The doctrine of *Wahdat-u 'l-Wujud* means that God and the Universe are not two separate entities, but form one unity. Existent is one. This soon becomes Identityism – that it is identical with everything else, which in the end passes on to pantheism, – that it is God and God is all. Shaikh Muhi-u'd-din Ibn-i-'Arabi (ob. 638 A.H. /1240 A.D.) was its powerful exponent

[71] K.A. Nizami (1955), *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-u'd-din Ganj-i-Shakar*, (Muslim University, Aligarh), p. 19.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

[73] Fn. 34: *Fawa'id-al-Fu'ad*, pp. 258-259.

[74] Fn. 35: *Ibid.*, p. 250.

[75] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-7.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 198.

[77] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-200.

[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 200-1.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

[81] Fn. 1: The distinction of Dhat and Sifat is very nearly the distinction of substance and attributes. At times it looks like that of existence and essence. It can be rendered as the distinction of Being and Nature, or It and Its Qualities. Asma', plural of Ism, means Divine Names with reference to particular Sifat or Dhat as they occur in the Quran, e.g. Rahim, the Merciful, as they are the names of Allah in virtue of His qualities or activities, i.e., an Ism combines Dhat and Sifat.

[82] Fn. 1: *Tajalli* is really shining forth. The conception underlying it is that God is Light and this Light shines forth as if bodily in many forms. Hence it may be translated as irradiation, effluence, emanation, manifestation and in philosophical terminology is equivalent to Mode. When the Light shines forth on itself it is *Tajalli-bi-nafsihi*. As the Light shines forth in various grades to the mystic it is *Tajalli-i-Dhati* or *Sifati*, etc., with reference to the mystic it means the vision of the Light or illumination by it. If this vision is that of the attributes of God it is *Tajalli-i-Sifati*, if it is the vision of the Being or Dhat of Allah it is *Tajalli-i-Dhati*.

[83] Fn. 3: The act of creation by the word ("Be") is nothing but the descent of the Creator Himself into the being of things.

[84] B.A. Faruqi, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-7.

[85] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*

- [86] *Ibid.*, pp. 196-7.
- [87] B.A. Faruqi, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
- [88] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- [89] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
- [90] Fn. 2: Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1294-1357 A.H.) was a great poet, philosopher and scholar. Since he wrote his *Asrar-i-Khudi* about 1333 A.H., he became a force which modified the trend of Muslim thought in politics and morals. He attacked mysticism for its doctrines of 'Fana' or self-annihilation, and substituted 'Khudi' or self-affirmation in its place. He also objected to *Wahdat-i-Wujud* or unityism.
- [91] Fn. 3: Cf. Iqbal's poems *Asrar-i-Khudi* [] and *Rumuz-i-Bikhudi* []. *Asrar-i-Khudi* (Secrets of Self): In this Dr. Iqbal denounces mysticism as un-Islamic in its origin and injurious to the national and political life of Muslims. *Rumuz-i-Bikhudi* (Secrets of Selflessness): In it he lays emphasis on the life according to the Quran and the Sunnat, and preaches such morals as are more positive.
- [92] B.A. Faruqi, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- [93] Fn. 15: "Mohammed Iqbal", *TCD*, p. 283.
- [94] Fn. 16: Margaret Smith, *Readings from the Mystics of Islam* (London: Luzac, 1972), p. 2.
- [95] Fn. 17: *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- [96] A.P. Ganguly (1990), *India, Mystic, Complex, and Real: A Detailed Study of E.M. Forster's A Passage to India*, (Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi), pp. 109-10.
- [97] T.P. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 583.
- [98] Fn. 1: *Haqq-ul-Yaqin*: Literally absolute certainty. *Yaqin* or certainty according to mystics has three stages: '*ilm-ul-yaqin*', '*ain-ul-yaqin*', '*haqq-ul-yaqin*'. One finds smoke and is certain that there is fire, this is '*ilm-ul-yaqin*', one sees fire with his own eyes, he is more sure than the first person of the existence of fire, this is '*ain-ul-yaqin*', one puts his hand in fire and gets a burn, he realises the existence of fire, this is *haqq-ul-yaqin*. With reference to the Being of Allah, the mystics believe that one passes through similar stages of certainty and realisation. But on the principle of the Mujaddid none of these kinds of *yaqin* is possible in case of the Being of God.
- [99] B.A. Faruqi, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-9.
- [100] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-1.
- [101] Fn. 25: 22. "An account of Sufi Mysticism", *Selections from the Rubaiyat and odes of Hafiz* (London: John M. Watkins, 1920), p. 16.
- [102] Fn. 26: Shaikh Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (London: Luzac & Co. 1908), p. 116.
- [103] A.P. Ganguly, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
- [104] (Ed) W. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
- [105] N. Hanif (2000), *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis: South Asia*, (Sarup & Sons, New Delhi), pp. 93-4.
- [106] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*
- [107] Fn. 177: *Ma'arij'l-Wilayat*, f. 15a. 177.
- [108] (Eds) M.V. Singh, B.B. Shrivastava (2011), *Art and Culture of Medieval India*, (Centrum Press, New Delhi; accessed: scribd.com, 09 Apr, 2014), p. 38.
- [109] The so-called Pakistani intellectual, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, was also guilty of saying something similar suggesting that "Sikhism is established upon Tawheed". If what he means by Tawheed is the innovated concept of *Tawheed al-Wujidi*, then there may be some merit to his claim. But, if he means *Tawheed* in the orthodox sense, then he is patently wrong.

- [110] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 202.
- [111] M.S. Ahluwalia, [*Influence of Islam and Sufism on Sikhism*](#), (Sikh Institute; accessed: June 07, 2014).
- [112] (Eds) S.S. Bhatia, A. Spencer (1999), *The Sikh Tradition: A Continuing Reality*, (Publication Bureau Punjabi University, Patiala), p. 33.
- [113] Trilochan Singh strongly rebuts this thesis arguing instead that Bhaktas like Kabir, Namdev and Ravidas associated themselves to the path and discipline of Bhakti. See: *Ernest Trumpp and W.H. McLeod as Scholars of Sikhi History Religion and Culture*, 1994, International Centre of Sikh Studies.
- [114] (Eds) S.S. Bhatia, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
- [115] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- [116] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*
- [117] S.S. Kohli (1980), *Philosophy of Guru Nanak*, (Publication Bureau Panjab University, Chandigarh), p. 119.
- [118] (Ed) A. Singh (2002), *Socio-Cultural Impact of Islam on India*, (Publication Bureau Panjab University, Chandigarh), p. 125.
- [119] K.A. Nizami, *op. cit.*, p. 19,
- [120] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
- [121] (Ed) A. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
- [122] A.C. Banerjee (1983), *The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Religion*, (), p. 142.
- [123] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
- [124] See [APPENDIX A](#).
- [125] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
- [126] *Ibid.*, pp. 200-1.
- [127] (Eds) S.S. Bhatia, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 36-7.
- [128] M.G. Ahmad (2005), *The Essence of Volume III*, (Islam International Publications Limited; accessed: Mar 31, 2014), p. 402.
- [129] M.M. Ali (2008), [*The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement*](#), (Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore Publications, U.K; accessed: Mar 31, 2014), pp. 47-8.
- [130] S.H. Ahmad (2010), [*An Introduction to the Hidden Treasures of Islam*](#), (Islam International Publications Ltd.), p. 169.
- [131] M.G. Ahmad (1903), *The Discovery of the Chola of Nanak*, (The Anjuman-i-Isha'at Islam, Qadian; The Review of Religions, Jan; accessed: Mar 31, 2014), pp. 33-4.
- [132] Fn. 1: I have questioned several well-informed Sikhs about this incident, but found them unable to verify it.
- [133] H.A. Walter (1918), *The Religious Life of India – The Ahmadiya Movement*, (Oxford University Press), pp. 106-8.
- [134] S.H. Ahmad, *op. cit.*
- [135] M.M. Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-8.
- [136] M.G. Ahmad (1903), *op. cit.*, pp. 32-3.
- [137] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- [138] *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
- [139] M.M. Ali, *op. cit.*
- [140] M.G. Ahmad (1903), *op. cit.*, p. 31.
- [141] H.S. Singha (2005), *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism (over 1000 Entries)*, (Hemkunt Publishers Ltd, New Delhi), p. 59.
- [142] Fn. 3: Unfortunately these items were destroyed in the Military Action (Blue Star) when the Indian army attacked the Golden Temple in June 1984.
- [143] G.S. Sidhu (1999), *A Challenge to Sikhism*, (Mohindra Art Press, London), pp. 16-7.
- [144] M.M. Ali, *op. cit.*

[145] M.G. Ahmad (1903), *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.
 [146] *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4.
 [147] M.G. Ahmad, *A Message of Peace*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
 [148] A. Jaleel, *op. cit.*
 [149] [Holy Robe of SHRI GURU NANAK DEV JI](#), (SikhiWiki; accessed: June 22, 2014).
 [150] [Dera Baba Nanak](#), (The Sikh Encyclopedia; accessed: June 22, 2014).
 [151] M.G. Ahmad (1903), *op. cit.*, p. 34.
 [152] M.G. Ahmad (2007), *The Need for the Imam*, (Islam International Publications Ltd, London), pp. 35-6.
 [153] M.G. Ahmad (2007), *The Criterion for Religions*, (Islam International Publications Ltd, UK), pp. 13-4.
 [154] Q.M. Barkatullah (1985), *Baba Nanak was a Muslim*, (The Review of Religions, Sept; accessed: Mar 31, 2014), p. 17.
 [155] A. Jaleel, *op. cit.*
 [156] M.G. Ahmad (1903), *op. cit.*
 [157] M.G. Ahmad (1903), *op. cit.*, p. 29.
 [158] A. Jaleel, *op. cit.*
 [159] A. Raza, [Baba Guru Nanak – A Muslim Saint](#), (Ahmadiyya Muslim Community; accessed: Mar 14, 2014).
 [160] T.P. Hughes, *op. cit.*
 [161] Ghulam Ahmad et al inexplicably overlooked the many times where Pincott unequivocally states that Nanak was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim:

- But, of course, the most remarkable expression of all is the emphatic and repeated announcement that “There is no Hindu; there is no Musalman.” This can mean nothing else than that it was **Nanak’s settled intention** to do away with the differences between those two forms of belief, **by instituting a third course which should SUPERSEDE both of them.**
- [T]he immediate successors of Nanak were aware that their great Guru occupied an intermediate position between Muhammadanism and Hinduism; **for we see that he is made to CONVERT Muhammadans on the one hand, and Hindus on the other.**
- Nanak took up an intermediate position between Islam and Hinduism, and sought to bring both under one common system. (bold, underline, capitalisation ours)

[162] T.P. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 588.
 [163] *Ibid.*, p. 586.
 [164] E. Trump (1877), *The Adi Granth, or the Holy Scriptures of the Sikhs*, (W. M. H. Allen & CO., London), p. lxxvii.
 [165] Fn. 95: The *Miharban Janamsakhi* records the dialogue that is presumed to have taken place between Guru Nanak and the *qazi*. There appears to be a distinct possibility of such a happening in the context of narration of this episode.
 [166] Fn. 96: These questions and answers are mentioned in the *Miharban Janamsakhi*. They are not found in any other *Janamsakhi*.
 [167] Fn. 97: All the *Janamsakhi* versions agree that Guru Nanak went to the mosque, along with the *qazi*, to say the *namaz*. It has to be taken as correct.
 [168] Fn. 98: This detail is given only in the *Bala Janamsakhi*, and in no one else. But this dialogue fits into the given situation.
 [169] Fn. 99: This event is mentioned in all the *Janamsakhi* versions.
 [170] E. Trump, *op. cit.*, p. xii-xiii.
 [171] Fn. 100: This episode is mentioned in all the *Janamsakhi* versions. The *Bala*

Janamsakhi records that Daulat Khan asked the Nanak that he could have said the *namaz* with him if the *qazi* had not been saying his. In reply, Nanak told him (Daulat Khan) that he himself was then buying horses in Kabul and Kandahar. At this Daulat Khan also became silent.

[172] Fn. 101: Bhai Gurdas in his var XI makes the following reference to Daulat Khan; “Daulat Khan was a virtuous person, a Muslim holy man, Jind, was also there who was beyond death.” Mufti Ghulam Sarwar’s *Tarikh-i-Makhzan-i-Punjab* (pp.28-29) says that Shaikh Badr-ud-Din Sherwani was called Jind Pir. He was a man of considerable influence. Bahlol Lodhi’s daughter was married to him. He got several villages in *jagir* with which he founded the Malerkotla State. He died in A.D. 1515. See also Griffin’s *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, 1940, Vol. II, p. 529. Bhai Randhir Singh says that Shaikh Badr-ud-Din Jind Pir was the *qazi* at Sultanpur when Guru Nanak went into the mosque to say *namaz*. However, this fact is not supported by any other source.

[173] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-8.

[174] A. Jaleel, *op. cit.*

[175] *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, (The Sikh Encyclopedia; accessed: Jul 04, 2014).

[176] Q.M. Barkatullah, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

[177] H. Singh (1969), *Guru Nanak*, (Asia Publishing House, Punjabi University Patiala), p. 18.

[178] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[179] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

[180] Q.M. Barkatullah, *op. cit.*

[181] A. Jaleel, *op. cit.*

[182] *Ibid.*

[183] *Bala JS*, p. 175.

[184] G.S. Sidhu, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[185] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

[186] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-1.

[187] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[188] E. Trump, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

[189] Fn. *Pur JS*, pp. 25-6 [i.e. Vir Singh (ed.), *Puratan Janam-sakhi*, 5th edition, Amritsar, 1959].

[190] W.H. McLeod (1980), *op. cit.*, p. 85.

[191] *Bhai Vir Singh’s Purataan Janamsakhi – Mecca pages 176-183.*

[192] S.S. Kapoor, M.K. Kapoor (2005), *Janam Saakhi Prampara*, (B. Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar), p. 180.

[193] Nanak said: “The Fourteenth Day: One who enters into the fourth state, overcomes time, and the three qualities of *raajas*, *taamas*, and *satva*.” (SGGS, 840)

“Your Power is diffused through the three *gunas*: *raajas*, *taamas* and *satva*.” (SGGS, 1038)

Kabir added: “*Raajas*, the quality of energetic activity shall pass away. *Taamas*, the quality of lethargic darkness shall pass away. *Saatvas*, the quality of peaceful light shall pass away as well.” (SGGS, 1204)

[194] S.S. Kapoor, M.K. Kapoor (2007), *Guru Granth Sahib – An Advance Stud*, Vol. 2, (Hemkunt Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi), p. 39.

[195] S.S. Kapoor (2005), *op. cit.*, pp. 179-80.

[196] Fn. 2: A parallel tradition on the authority of I. ‘Abbas via al-Zuhri simply says that the idols were strengthened by lead.

[197] A. Guillaume (2011), *The Life of Muhammad – A Translation of Ibn Ishaq’s Sirat*

Rasul Allah, (Oxford University Press, Pakistan), p. 552.

[198] A. Jaleel, *op. cit.*

[199] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-1.

[200] G.S. Sidhu, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[201] (Eds) S.S. Bhatia, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[202] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

[203] (Eds) S.S. Bhatia, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

[204] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

[205] *Ibid.*

[206] Fn. 4: The Adi Granth, p. 140.

[207] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*

[208] (Ed) A. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-3.

[209] E. Trump, *op. cit.*, p. xxxi.

[210] S. Singh (1996), *About Compilation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, (Lok Sahit Parkashan, Amritsar), pp. 170-1.

[211] Fn. 15: Reported by Ahmad, Al-Bazzaar, At-Tabaraani, At-Tayalisi, and Al-Khateeb. Al-Hakim said it is authentic and Ad-Dhahabi agreed. Many think that this reference is a Prophetic Hadeeth, and it is not. It is authentically related to Abdullah bin Mas'oud. A great benefit is deduced from Ibn Mas'oud's explanation as to what constitutes *Ijmaa'*. In the last part of his statement marked by { }, as reported by Al-Hakim, he clearly explains that the agreement between the *Sahabah* constituted a state of *Ijmaa'* (consensus between Muslims). Therefore, in any generation, the consensus of opinion amongst the learned, pious and righteous scholars who follow the companions' path regarding any matter not directly stated in Quran or *Sunnah*, produces a state of *Ijmaa'*. Blind following and innovations are not part *Ijmaa'*.

[212] S. al-Saleh, [*Islam: The Complete and Final Message to Man*](#), (Understand Islam; accessed: Aug 09, 2014), p. 10.

[213] Shaykh Wasiullah ibn Muhammad Abbaas:

Imam Ahmed narrated it in his 'Musnad' 1/379, #3600 he said: Abu Bakr said to us, from Aasim, from Zir ibn Hubaysh, from Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, and the chain is 'Hasan' (Good). Also at Tayalaasee narrated it in his Musnad pg. 23, see the introduction of 'al Muwafaqaat' by ash Shaatibee 3/4.

– W.M. Abbaas (2013), *Al Ittiba: and the Principles of Fiqh of the Righteous Predecessors*, (Darussalam, New York), p. 62.

Ed.- See also Ibn Taymiyyah's *Majmu' al-Fataawa* 11/573. Shaykh Nasir ud-Deen al-Albani declared it *Hasan* in *ad-Da'eefah* 2/17.

[214] Fn. 2: The Adi Granth, p. 1381.

[215] Fn. 3: *Ibid*, p. 141.

[216] Fn. 4: *Ibid*, p. 465.

[217] (Ed) A. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-3.

[218] E. Trump, *op. cit.*, p. xxxii.

[219] H. Court (1888), *History of the Sikhs; or Translation of the Sikkhan De Raj Di Vikhia*, (Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore), pp. 197-99.

[220] *Bala JS*, p. 164.

[221] G.S. Sidhu, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[222] A. Jaleel, *op. cit.*

- [223] *Bala JS*, p. 155.
- [224] *Vars Bhai Gurdas*, Pannaa 1.
- [225] G. Ibadullah (1988), <href="#" target="_blank">*Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, (The Review of Religions, vol. LXXXIII, Jan; accessed: Mar 31, 2014), pp. 13-4.
- [226] Fn. 491: Bhai Gurdas versified this dialogue as under: The *Qazis* and *Mullahs* go together and ask about righteousness. God has enacted a huge drama and none can comprehend it. They wanted the Guru to open his book and tell whether Hindu or Muslim is great. Baba told the Hajis- Both of them will weep without good deeds. (*Var 1 Pauri 33*).
- [227] Fn. 492: After that it is said that a dialogue took place with Pir Rukan-ud-din and Pir Patlia. Bhai Vir Singh calls the latter Pir Patnia. That implies he could be Shaikh Ibrahim of Pakpatan with whom the Guru had a dialogue at Pakpatan, but this remains unconfirmed. However, the fact that the Makhdum of Multan and Makhdum of Uch went to Mecca at the time of Guru Nanak is confirmed. The point whether Shaikh Ibrahim also went to Mecca at that time cannot be ascertained. Similarly, no information is forthcoming in respect of Rukan-ud-din.
- [228] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-90.
- [229] G.S. Sidhu, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
- [230] Fn. 3: The [] (*kafni*) a kind of woollen shirt without sleeves, worn by Faqirs.
- [231] E. Trump, *op. cit.*, p. xv.
- [232] *Ibid.*, p. xxxiv.
- [233] *Ibid.*, p. xxxix.
- [234] *Ibid.*, p. xl.
- [235] G.S. Sidhu, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- [236] Fn. 128: In both the *Vilayatvali* and the *Miharban* versions, the episode has been given as above.
- [237] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-5.
- [238] *Bhai Vir Singh's Purataan Janamsakhi – Mecca pages 176-183*.
- [239] T.P. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 589.
- [240] Fn. 483: This is based on the *sakhi* titled, “Guru Ji Hinglaj Vich” in *Miharban's Janamsakhi*, pp. 461-62. Although this episode is found in no other *Janamsakhi* version yet it seems correct since it happened at a place which is on the Guru's way to Mecca. Bhai Gurdas has also said that the Guru first went to Mecca and then to Baghdad. Thus, the Guru's journey by sea seems probable and correct. Lakhpat, sarovar at Narain Swami and Hinglaj fall on this route.
- [241] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-8.
- [242] Fn. 490: The Utterance of this hymn by Guru Nanak had nothing unusual about it because the Hajis who put these questions to him were especially those who had gone from India and they could comprehend *Sadh Bhakha*. The *Vilayatvali Janamsakhi* records that the Guru uttered this hymn in Mecca in response to the questions of Hajis there.
- [243] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-90.
- [244] Fn. 528: The episode of the Guru's visit to Kabul is from Mani Singh *Janamsakhi*. Although it does not appear in any other *Janamsakhi* version, but Kabul fell on the Guru's route while returning from Baghdad. There is every possibility of the Guru's halt there.
- [245] Fn. 529: Mani Singh *Janamsakhi*, Bombay edition, p. 210.
- [246] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
- [247] *Ibid.*, p. 207.
- [248] Fn. 522: This episode is recorded in the Bhai Mani Singh *Janamsakhi*, but is not found in any other *Janamsakhi* text. It seems correct because Mashhad is situated on the old route from Baghdad to Kabul.
- [249] Fn. 523: If we carefully analyse the Mani Singh text, we find indications that Pir Abdul

Rahman was a native of Gurdez.

[250] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-7.

[251] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[252] Despite being recorded in the *Vaars* of Gurdas, some dispute has been raised over the historical truth of this exchange. See Prof Devinder Singh Chahal's [*Did Guru Nanak meet Pir Dastgir and Pir Bahlol Dana?*](#)

[253] Fn. 511: These details are on the basis of a *Sakhi* in the Bhai Mani Singh *Janamsakhi*.

[254] Fn. 512: Bhai Gurdas says:

Gave the call after saying the *namaz*, the entire world was benumbed.

The city was deserted, Pir was astonished to see this.

He saw attentively a faqir, greatly God-absorbed, was he.

[255] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

[256] M.G. Ahmad, *A Message of Peace*, *op. cit.*

[257] E. Trump, *op. cit.*, p. lxvii.

[258] S.S. Kapoor (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 171.

[259] M. Ahmad (2008), [*Approaching the West*](#), (Majlis Anṣarullāh, U.S.A; accessed: Aug 03, 2014), p. 102.

[260] Q.M. Barkatullah, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

[261] Abu Hurairah reported: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) informed his companions about the death of Negus (Najashi), the king of Abyssinia, the day that he died. And then the Prophet led them to the prayer ground where he lined them up and offered funeral prayer for him with four *Takbirs*."

[262] A.-P. S. Mandair (2013), *Sikhism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, (Bloomsburys Publishing Plc), p. 27.

[263] W.H. McLeod (1984), *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism*, (Manchester University Press), p. 25.

[264] T.P. Hughes, *op. cit.*

[265] E. Trump, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvi.

[266] Fn. 27: It is said that a quarrel arose between the Hindus and the Muslims as the Guru passed away. The Hindus said that the Guru's body be cremated whereas the Muslims said that it be buried. The reference to this quarrel is found in *Vilayatwali*.

[267] K. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

[268] M.N. Gulati (2008), *Comparative Religious and Philosophies: Anthropomorphism and Divinity*, (Atlantic Publishers and Distributors Ltd), p. 280.

[269] (Eds) M.V. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

[270] R. Dalal (2010), *Hinduism: An Alphabetical Guide*, (Penguin Books, India), p. 184.

[271] Raj Pruthi:

A legend says that while the disciples were thus violently disputing for the possession of the dead body, a celestial voice was heard commanding them to remove the wrapper of the coffin and look inside. On this being done, no corpse was found but the coffin contained only a heap of fresh flowers. Even this miracle could not settle the dispute. It is said the heap of flowers were equally divided among the Hindus and Muslims, the former taking away their share for burning and the latter for burying.

– R. Pruthi (2004), *Sikhism and Indian Civilization*, (Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi), p. 12.

Sehdev Kumar:

At his death, both Hindus and Muslims claimed him to be one of their saints and thus wished to perform the last rites according to their own customs, the Hindus planning to cremate the body and the Muslim to bury it. The legend has it that when they removed the shroud, there was nothing to be found except a heap of flowers.

– (Eds) S.S. Bhatia, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

[272] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[273] G.S. Sidhu, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[274] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[275] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[276] A. Jaleel, *op. cit.*

[277] (Ed) H. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-3.

[278] *Ibid.*, pp. 293-4.

[279] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[280] N. Hanif, *op. cit.*, p. 30.